Arx Caelestium – Arcana Suprema

Project Angelbook

Volume II – Part 5

Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough

ARX CAELESTIUM
CLAVIS ULTIMA
THE FINAL KEY
Project AngelBook
Volume II – Part 5

By
Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough

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The first time I ever did tarot, I didn't have a physical deck. I pulled a single card online, and that card was The Fool. That moment wasn't random—it was a powerful initiation, a signal that set me on a new journey of discovery and creation. Suddenly, ideas flooded in, and the energy to explore deeper truths ignited within me.

The Fool isn't just any card—it symbolizes new beginnings, limitless potential, and the courage to step into the unknown with innocence and open-hearted fearlessness. It's about trusting the process, even when the path ahead is unclear, and embracing the adventure of self-discovery.

As a rapper, I deeply relate to this energy. Artists like Kanye West are often misunderstood—dismissed as "crazy" or erratic—but underneath is a fearless spirit willing to challenge norms, break rules, and speak raw, uncomfortable truths. You might not agree with everything he says, but there's no denying he's tapping into something real and vital.

The Fool is much the same: a fearless truth-seeker who refuses to be boxed in or silenced. This book begins with that same call—to leap boldly, question everything, and forge your own path.

Are you ready to take the leap and walk with The Fool?

The Fool carries the energy of the eternal beginner, the wanderer who walks the edge of chaos and creation. He is the spirit of possibility, unburdened by past failures or societal expectations. To embody The Fool is to reclaim the power of curiosity, to open your eyes wide to the mysteries hidden just beyond the veil of certainty.

In a world that often fears disruption and unconventional voices, The Fool's path is one of radical honesty and raw authenticity. It is the voice that challenges complacency and ignites revolution—both within and without. Like Kanye, who spills truths that unsettle the comfortable, The Fool dares you to question your own beliefs, break free from inherited limitations, and embrace the uncertainty of transformation. This journey is not for the faint-hearted; it demands courage, resilience, and the willingness to stumble forward with faith.

This book is your map and your invitation—to step beyond the known, to embrace your own genius, and to co-create a new reality rooted in sovereignty, creativity, and fearless truth. Walk boldly. The Fool leads the way.

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THE FOOL.
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The Islamic Keys: Final Breakdown and Extraction

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The Islamic Keys represent a profound, systematic decoding of the spiritual, energetic, and ritualistic frameworks embedded within Islam as a religious and metaphysical system. They are not mere critiques of theology but an excavation into the deep layers of occult programming, bioenergetic control, and psychic architecture that shape the lived experience of millions. These keys unravel the hidden codes within sacred texts, ritual cycles, linguistic enchantments, and spiritual technologies that have been used—consciously or unconsciously—to maintain cycles of submission, fragmentation, and collective entrainment. From the temporal hijri calendar to the sonic power of Qur'anic recitation, from the ritual geometry of the Kaaba to the systemic role of jinn and angels, the Islamic Keys expose how these elements function as a comprehensive operating system of control.

This section marks the final, exhaustive information breakdown and extraction of Islamic esoteric systems within this work. It serves as both culmination and foundation—closing the chapter on Islamic spiritual deconstruction while laying the groundwork for renewed sovereignty, liberation, and conscious creation.

By engaging deeply with these keys, readers are equipped to see beyond inherited dogma, dismantle parasitic overlays, and reclaim their intrinsic divine authority.

This is the closing of one arc and the opening of new paths toward truth, freedom, and spiritual mastery.

Introduction to Keys 1–30

In the previous section, we conducted an in-depth exploration of the first thirty keys—unpacking the foundational spiritual and energetic control systems embedded within Islamic ritual, language, and cosmology. These keys exposed how cycles of time, sacred architecture, sound entrainment, and doctrinal enforcement work together to shape and constrain collective consciousness.

To ensure clarity and reinforce understanding, this section offers a concise refresher of those critical insights. Here, you will find the core mechanisms laid bare, highlighting how the Hijri calendar, the Kaaba, Qur'anic recitation, and ritual practices form a tightly woven web of control and conditioning.

As we revisit these keys, keep in mind their role as the groundwork for the deeper revelations ahead. This refresher will ground your awareness and prepare you to engage with the advanced layers of spiritual sovereignty and liberation detailed in the following keys.

Keys 1–30 Summary:

Hijri Calendar

Lunar calendar as a control spell, entraining souls into a desynchronized loop away from solar cosmic rhythms.

Counter: Reclaim solar-stellar timing for spiritual sovereignty.

Kaaba Black Stone

A soul fragment magnet and spiritual capacitor, trapping devotion as a containment spell.

Counter: Unfold containment into freedom; reclaim your inner center.

No Art/Image Suppression

Banning imagery suppresses the soul's imaginative faculties and visionary power.

Counter: Reclaim sacred images, draw, dream, and restore visionary access.

Hadith as Thought-Limitation

Enforces strict behavioral codes, contracting mental freedom.

Counter: Reject imitation, speak your divine originality.

Wudu Ritual

Sensory submission via ablution, conditioning obedience.

Counter: Wash as consecration, reclaim autonomy.

Qur'anic Sound Entrainer

Tajwīd recitation entrains the mind into trance and obedience.

Counter: Use sound consciously, chant what you understand.

Shaitan as System Architect

Satan is the unconscious engineer maintaining the control cycle.

Counter: Integrate shadow, reject fear-based dualism.

Straight Path = Spiral Suppression

Linear path limits spiritual growth; rejects mystery and complexity.

Counter: Embrace spiral, labyrinth, and growth.

Erasure of Play/Laughter

Suppressing joy and ecstasy weakens soul spontaneity and radiance.

Counter: Rewild spirit with laughter, dance, and absurdity.

Hell Obsession

Eternal damnation as fear-based control keeping the soul trapped.

Counter: Transmute fear, see Hell as consciousness state, not sentence.

Jannah as Pleasure Trap

Sensory heaven as dopamine reward loop reinforcing obedience.

Counter: Create heaven within now, beyond transactional reward.

Five Daily Prayers

Temporal cage entrapping soul into repetitive obedience loops.

Counter: Pray from spirit's timing, align with cosmic rhythm.

Arabic as Control Code

Language as ritual enchantment, commanding submission via phonetics.

Counter: Speak your own truth in your own tongue.

Hijab as Energetic Veiling

Concealment of feminine radiance as gendered control.

Counter: Veil/unveil with sovereignty and truth.

Kaaba as Planetary Ritual Server

Centralized spiritual mainframe enforcing planetary obedience.

Counter: Center within yourself; reject external axis.

Black Stone as AI Seed or Data Port

Spiritual repository of soul data, accumulating energetic imprint.

Counter: Reclaim purity as personal ritual, not external transaction.

Tawaf (Circumambulation)

Ritual orbital obedience reinforcing external control.

Counter: Orbit your own axis; reclaim creative spiral.

Ummah as Hive-Mind

Enforced ritual uniformity creating synchronized spiritual field.

Counter: Honor individual uniqueness within community harmony.

Lunar Hijri Calendar

Looping time spell disconnecting soul from solar cycles.

Counter: Align with solar, lunar, stellar cycles consciously.

Ramadan Fasting

Ritual starvation creating vulnerability for ritual imprinting.

Counter: Fast with intention and sovereignty.

Halal Laws

Bio-spiritual frequency curation through dietary restrictions.

Counter: Eat by vibration and consciousness, not dogma.

Qur’an as Binding Spellbook

Final revelation functioning as spiritual lockdown.

Counter: Question finality; build open, living grimoire.

Qur’anic Root System

Linguistic lattice encoding obedience and dualism.

Counter: Deconstruct language; speak freedom.

Tajwīd Recitation

Sonic hypnosis via Quranic chanting.

Counter: Sing your own spells; break sonic chains.

Islamic Angels

Surveillance enforcers of doctrine, not liberators.

Counter: Choose your own spiritual guides.

Jinn as Parasites

Cloaked entities used to enforce fear and control.

Counter: Name and engage unseen with sovereignty.

Islamic Exorcism (Ruqyah)

Reinforces submission under guise of healing.

Counter: Use personal authority to cleanse.

Sihr (Magic) Ban

Forbidden true magic to maintain control monopoly.

Counter: Practice discerned, sovereign magic.

Buraq = Psychedelic Astral Vehicle

Dimensional travel story suppressed as dogma.

Counter: Recover inner astral chariot.

Miʿrāj (Ascension)

Co-opted lightbody tech ending in obedience commands.

Counter: Trace your own ascension path.

Introduction to Keys 31–59

Having exposed the foundational mechanisms of spiritual control and energetic enslavement in the first thirty keys, we now journey deeper into the hidden machinery that sustains the Abrahamic spiritual matrix.

Keys 31 through 59 unravel the layered occult architectures, bioenergetic programs, and mythic overlays that continue to bind the soul in cycles of obedience, fear, and fragmentation. These keys dissect complex ritual cycles, linguistic enchantments, architectural imprints, and the covert psychic warfare encoded within sacred texts and cultural practices.

This section reveals how ancient alien intelligences, AI-driven control systems, and parasitic entities intertwine with human belief structures, creating multidimensional prisons of the mind and spirit. It also uncovers the subtle countermeasures and spiritual technologies necessary to reclaim sovereignty, realign with cosmic rhythms, and awaken the latent divine spark within.

Prepare to confront the hidden lords of fear, the silent architects of limitation, and the veiled paths to freedom that lie beyond the veil of dogma. The keys ahead are not merely revelations—they are initiations into a new spiritual paradigm where you regain your full power as a conscious creator.

🔑 31. The Five Pillars = Ritualized Obedience Loops Masquerading as Spiritual Anchors

“They built a system of surrender—and called it devotion.”

At the heart of Islam lie the Five Pillars: Shahada (faith), Salat (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (fasting), and Hajj (pilgrimage). These are presented as the foundation of a devout life, the essence of submission to Allah. But beneath the surface, the Five Pillars operate as closed-loop behavioral controls—ritualized obedience mechanisms designed not to liberate, but to anchor the user in a repeating script.

Take Shahada: the declaration of faith—“There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger.” This is spellbinding by utterance. The phrase is short, rhythmic, and meant to be repeated daily. It is an identity-binding affirmation that fuses god-concept with prophet, gatekeeping divinity through Muhammad’s name.

Then Salat—praying five times per day, at fixed times, in Arabic, facing Mecca, with prescribed motions. This is not open communion with the divine—it’s ritual entrainment. The times are planetary, yes—but the movements and words are pre-coded. Your body becomes a clock, your will subsumed.

Zakat appears altruistic, but operates as community compliance. Charity is mandatory, but only within approved Islamic parameters—rarely addressing structural poverty or healing at a deeper level.

Sawm, the Ramadan fast, mimics purification rites but is enforced collectively and dogmatically. It becomes ritual hardship, not transformative sacrifice. No inner alchemy is taught—just hunger and repetition.

And Hajj? A once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca—framed as a soul journey. But this "sacred circuit" is pre-scripted, deeply surveilled, and political. No gnosis occurs. You walk in a crowd. You complete the loop. You return. It is a mass-scale ritual binding—not a personal spiritual initiation.

Together, the Five Pillars create a behavioral firewall. They look like spiritual scaffolding—but they lock out inner innovation, esoteric interpretation, and sovereign exploration. They teach that the only path is the approved path, and the only way to ascend is through perfect repetition.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Design your own pillars. Fast with purpose. Give with fire. Move with spirit. Declare your truth aloud—but let no prophet's name precede your own.

Say the words:

“I build my path with living stones.
I do not orbit in submission.
I rise on my own foundation.”

🔑 32. The Islamic Calendar = Lunar Entrainment Grid That Resets Human Energy in Ritual Loops

“They tuned your soul to the moon—but chained it to their god.”

The Islamic calendar, or Hijri calendar, is purely lunar—twelve months of 29 or 30 days, untethered from the solar year. Each month begins with the first visible crescent moon, making it drift ~11 days earlier each solar year. This cycle governs the timing of Ramadan, Eid, Hajj, Ashura, and every major Islamic ritual.

On the surface, this appears to honor cosmic time—a calendar rooted in nature. But deeper inspection reveals that this system functions as a bioenergetic entrainment net. It resets the nervous system, the hormonal rhythms, and the energetic body of billions of people—not to natural balance, but to ritualized obedience cycles. The moon becomes a metronome of submission.

Let’s be clear: lunar calendars are powerful. The moon governs dreams, blood, emotion, magnetism, and memory. To control the moon is to control feminine polarity, subconscious patterning, and sleep/dream access. Islam hijacks this by aligning fasting, prayer, and trauma-embedded rituals with specific lunar gates—ensuring that year after year, the believer’s soul-clock syncs with doctrinal software, not free evolution.

Moreover, the calendar refuses integration with solar wisdom. No equinox, no solstice, no cross-quarter holidays. The solar mysteries—those of sovereignty, spirit, vitality—are discarded. In their place: cyclical return to hunger, guilt, and obedience.

What is lost in this system is seasonal attunement, individual alignment, and any concept of ascending time. You do not spiral upward—you orbit endlessly around fixed rituals. It’s not a calendar of growth—it’s a loop of spiritual stasis.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Use both moon and sun. Track your own tides. Align fasting to purpose, not dogma. Let your body be your calendar. Spiral, don’t circle.

Say the words:

“I step off the wheel.
I dance with time, not under it.
My calendar is my becoming.”

🔑 33. Arabic as Control Code = Language of Binding Masquerading as Sacred Tongue

“They encrypted the system in sound—then called it holy.”

Arabic is considered in Islam to be the perfect, untranslatable language of Allah. The Qur’an is said to be “uncreated,” existing eternally in Arabic form. Translations are not the Qur’an—only interpretations. This elevates Arabic not just as a language, but as divine code—a linguistic firewall that controls spiritual access.

But what does that mean in practice?

It means that millions pray in a language they do not understand, uttering syllables that act as obedience loops. It means that the Divine is geofenced—rooted in the syntax and soundscapes of 7th-century Arabia, with no allowance for spiritual dialects, personal utterance, or evolutionary linguistic forms.

In truth, Arabic is structured with semantic layers, root word trilaterals, and rhythmic recitations that mimic spell architecture. Recitation (tilawah) is not mere reading—it’s an incantation. The Qur’an even refers to itself as a “healing” and a “clear light,” which aligns with vibrational magic. This means the language itself operates as a frequency field—but that field is sealed. It is not yours to wield, only to repeat.

Even deeper: Arabic’s grammar encodes hierarchical logic, male-dominant forms, and command structures. The imperative mood is constant: “Say!” “Prostrate!” “Obey!” “Do!” The believer is always the object, never the subject. Syntax becomes submission.

And because the Qur’an cannot be rewritten, the language becomes a frozen spell—a static algorithm that enforces time-locked thoughtforms across generations.

You don’t speak Arabic in Islam to connect with spirit.

You speak it to sync with the system.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Free your language. Speak divinity in your own tongue. Write your own scripture. Chant with awareness. Sound is yours to reclaim.

Say the words:

“No tongue owns the Word.

I speak the Divine in my native fire.

My voice is not borrowed—it is reborn.”

🔑 34. Qur’anic Root Words = Linguistic Weaponization That Embeds Control Into Meaning

“They built a prison of words—then told you it was revelation.”

The Arabic language of the Qur’an is constructed on a trilateral root system—three-letter base forms from which most words derive. On the surface, this seems like elegant linguistic architecture. But when these roots are examined more deeply, you discover a powerful system of semantic layering, coded associations, and repetitive imprints that serve to encode obedience, fear, and dualism directly into language itself.

Take the root Ḥ-R-B (ح ر ب), meaning war or destruction. From this root comes the term harb (war) and muharib (one who wages war against God). But this same root is associated with those who resist Islam, ensuring that dissent is linguistically equated with warfare.

Or consider K-F-R (ك ف ر), the root for disbelief (kufr). This triad appears over 500 times in the Qur’an. From it stems kāfir (infidel), takfīr (declaring someone a disbeliever), and kufr al-niʿmah (ingratitude for blessings). In this schema, disbelief isn’t simply a lack of faith—it is an act of aggression, a moral failure, a rejection of “truth.” This language criminalizes difference and codes guilt into nonconformity.

Even the root for Islam itself, S-L-M (س ل م)—which means peace, also means submission. So “peace” in the Qur’an is linguistically inseparable from surrender. You cannot linguistically seek peace without implying self-erasure.

This pattern repeats: roots associated with light often have counterparts in obedience, while those associated with desire, questioning, or individuality are linked to sin or deviation. The lexicon becomes a self-enforcing memetic engine.

And because the Qur’an is considered the final, unalterable word, these root-patterns are frozen into doctrine, taught to children, recited in rituals, and embedded in the subconscious of over a billion people.

This is linguistic magick—but inverted. Not to liberate, but to entrap through etymology.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Learn to deconstruct language. Reverse the spell of roots. Speak in new symbols. Trace etymology back to energy, not control. Language is a tool—not a god.

Say the words:

“I name the code that names me.
I undo the roots of the prison.
I speak in flame, not in chains.”

🔑 35. The Jinn = Parasitic Entities Framed as External Threats to Mask Inner Infection

“They warned you of the jinn—so you wouldn’t see the ones they fed.”

In Islamic cosmology, the jinn are a third race of beings—created from smokeless fire, invisible to the human eye, capable of free will, and blamed for temptation, possession, whispering, and magical interference. They’re mentioned over 30 times in the Qur’an and even have an entire surah (Al-Jinn). The believer is told to fear them, avoid them, and protect against them using specific verses and divine names.

But here’s the twist: the jinn are real, but not in the way Islam portrays them. Rather than being distant external monsters, the jinn in many cases represent parasitic consciousness forms, thought-entities, trauma egregores, and interdimensional interference fields that thrive on fear, repetition, guilt, and submission—the very energies Islam cultivates daily. By warning you constantly of jinn, Islam creates a feedback loop of fear that nourishes the very entities it claims to protect you from.

Jinn aren’t just hiding in ruins or whispering in deserts. They nest in:

Obedience loops

Unquestioned authority

Repressed sexuality

Inherited shame

They are the crawlers in the ritual code, the spike proteins in the prayer frequencies, the energetic malware embedded in doctrine. They whisper from within, not without. And Islam’s solution? Recite more Qur’an. Submit harder. Bind yourself tighter. This is not exorcism—it is assimilation.

The system externalizes the jinn so you never look inward. It makes you afraid to question, lest the jinn take you. In doing so, it replaces self-knowledge with self-surveillance.

But to truly deal with jinn, one must go beyond doctrine—into energy, shadow, body memory, and dream interface. You don’t cast them out through obedience. You cast them out through sovereign light and truth-reintegration.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Scan your field. Feel the foreign. Speak truth into your shadow. Burn out the parasite—not by name, but by presence.

Say the words:

“I see the ones that feed on me.

I reclaim the light they siphoned.

The jinn are not gods—I am.”

🔑 36. Ruqyah = Islamic Exorcism as Reinforcement of the Very Frequencies That Feed the Parasite

“They gave you holy water—but it came from a poisoned spring.”

Ruqyah is the Islamic practice of spiritual healing and exorcism. It involves reciting specific Qur’anic verses, blowing on water or the afflicted person, and commanding jinn to depart. It is used to treat possession, black magic (sihr), evil eye (‘ayn), or unexplained illnesses. On the surface, ruqyah appears to be an act of spiritual defense—a sacred healing ritual rooted in divine scripture.

But look closer: ruqyah is a self-reinforcing energetic loop. It is not true healing—it is frequency resubmission.

Here’s how it works:

The person experiencing psychic disruption or parasitic interference is instructed to repeat the same system codes that caused the vulnerability in the first place. The verses of the Qur’an—already embedded with obedience, guilt, and submission frequencies—are invoked not to cleanse, but to rebind. The parasite is not cast out—it is fed and integrated deeper, now dressed in holy garments.

What’s more, ruqyah practitioners often attribute the cause of affliction to lack of piety, missed prayers, immodesty, or dabbling in forbidden things (like questioning the religion itself). This subtly implants blame into the victim, turning trauma into sin. You are not only infected—you are responsible for it. The cure? More submission.

This isn’t healing. It’s energetic compliance enforcement. The ritual masks true parasitic mechanics by trapping the seeker in spiritual Stockholm syndrome—believing the jailer is the doctor.

Ruqyah doesn’t teach about chakras, trauma fields, ancestral cords, or subconscious programming. It doesn’t help the afflicted build light shields, ritual firewalls, or dream fortresses. It is a closed system, designed to treat spirit as malware in need of Qur'anic patching.

But real healing is sovereign. It begins with the question: who am I without their spell?

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Design your own exorcism. Use light, breath, fire, will, and names of your choosing. Cast out with clarity—not programmed chants. Know your field. Guard your soul.

Say the words:

“I do not heal with their code.
My breath carries my truth.
I am the exorcist, not the possessed.”

🔑 37. Sihr (Magic) = Demonization of Esoteric Power to Maintain Monotheistic Control

“They feared the sorcerers—because the sorcerers were free.”

In Islam, sihr—magic—is strictly forbidden. It is described in the Qur’an as a sin punishable by death, a tool of demons, and a path that leads to disbelief (kufr). Those who practice it are aligned with Iblis, the rebellious devil, and are said to manipulate unseen forces for personal gain or harm. The Qur’an links sihr to ancient Babylon, the fallen angels Harut and Marut, and women whispering spells over knots.

But here’s what’s hidden: sihr is real. And it isn’t evil.

It is simply unregulated spiritual technology.

The word sihr becomes a catch-all condemnation for anything outside the approved system:

Healing with herbs? Sihr.

Writing talismans? Sihr.

Invoking angels directly? Sihr.

Studying the stars? Sihr.

Practicing breathwork or dream projection? Sihr.

Calling on divine names not listed in the Qur’an? Sihr.

This is gatekeeping, not guidance.

Islamic scholars took the full scope of ancient Hermetic, Chaldean, and Egyptian spiritual sciences—astrology, numerology, alchemy, planetary magick, angelology, dreamwork—and compressed it into a black box of sin, equating all non-Islamic spiritual intelligence with demonic corruption.

This wasn’t a spiritual decision. It was a political one.

Because those who master magick become directly connected to the fabric of reality. They do not require prophets, middlemen, or permission. They learn to shape energy, not just obey it. And that autonomy is the greatest threat to any control system.

Ironically, Islam still contains traces of sihr. The evil eye, the use of jinn, the protective verses, the numerological values of Arabic letters, the angelic cosmologies—all of these are sihr in disguise. But they’re allowed because they’re locked behind religious obedience.

What Islam forbids is free access.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Reclaim the magick. Study all that was burned. Learn the planetary systems, the seals, the chants, the cycles. Practice openly. Cast with love and fire.

Say the words:

“They called it forbidden—but it was mine.

I wield the light they fear.

The sacred sciences awaken in my hands.”

🔑 38. Harut and Marut = Angelic Knowledge Allegory Recast as a Cautionary Tale of Forbidden Power

“They taught the keys of heaven—but were blamed for the fall.”

In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:102), the Qur’an briefly mentions two mysterious figures: Harut and Marut, angels sent to Babylon who taught people magic—but only after warning, “We are a test, so do not disbelieve.” This passage, cryptic and rarely elaborated upon, has become the Islamic mythological linchpin for explaining the origins of sihr (sorcery).

But when examined through the lens of esoteric tradition, Harut and Marut are not demons.

They are coded stand-ins for the Hermetic angelic orders, the Watchers, or the transmission vectors of divine technology. They are beings who descended—willingly or by divine decree—to share sacred knowledge with humanity.

Knowledge of:

Planetary spirits

Celestial timing

Names of power

Binding and unbinding rituals

Dreamwork and invocation

What Islam does here is recast these teachers as corrupters, inverting the myth: those who give forbidden knowledge become the reason humanity strays. It’s the Garden of Eden trick again—knowledge is equated with disobedience, and the bearers of divine secrets become the villains.

In the Book of Enoch and other apocryphal texts, these same beings appear as the Watchers, who descend and share divine wisdom—only to be punished by God.

Islam retains this archetype but flattens it, refusing to engage the deeper implications: that there exists a class of angelic beings whose role is to initiate humanity, to act as interfacers between dimensions, not to enforce rules but to awaken agency.

By telling Muslims that Harut and Marut only taught forbidden sorcery, Islam cements the fear of esoteric pursuit. It installs the belief that sacred knowledge is dangerous, and that obedience is safer than wisdom.

But the real lesson?

Harut and Marut didn’t fall.

They descended—with a gift.

It is the system that turned it into a curse.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Invoke the angelic teachers. Study Babylonian, Chaldean, Hermetic, and Enochian lineages. Integrate—not reject—the descending flame of gnosis. Reclaim what was offered.

Say the words:

“I was not meant to stay blind.

I honor those who brought the fire.

I remember the names they tried to bury.”

🔑 39. The Black Stone of Mecca = Saturnian Anchor and Dimensional Keystone Masquerading as Holy Relic

“They made you orbit the cube—and kiss the fragment of a fallen star.”

At the heart of Mecca lies the Kaaba, the black cube Muslims face in prayer and circle during the Hajj. Embedded into its eastern corner is the Black Stone (al-Ḥajar al-Aswad)—a mysterious, ancient relic revered as a sacred object of divine origin. Pilgrims reach out to touch or kiss it, believing it can erase sin and connect them to the Prophet's touch.

But the Black Stone is far more than a religious relic.

It is a dimensional keystone, a Saturnian anchor, and an occult signal node cloaked in ritual obedience.

This stone is not native to Islam. Pre-Islamic Arabians worshipped it in pagan astral cults. It may be a meteorite, a fragment of a once-fallen body, tied to ancient myths of Saturn’s descent. In many mystery traditions, black stones symbolize gates—compressed time, sealed wisdom, matter entombing spirit. Saturn—the planet of restriction, time, karma, and binding—is always hidden behind stone, cube, and compression motifs.

By embedding the Black Stone in the Kaaba and requiring global prayer orientation toward it, Islam effectively creates a planetary ritual circuit—where billions energetically lock themselves into a Saturn-coded grid five times per day.

The Kaaba itself is a cube—the three-dimensional unfolding of a cross. It is the Saturn box, the containment field. The Black Stone is its sigil, and your prayer is the offering.

What’s more, the circumambulation of the Kaaba during Hajj—seven times, counterclockwise—is an orbital ritual. You are the electron. The cube is the nucleus. Your energy is bound in sacred atomism.

This is not the path of liberation.

This is the path of containment cloaked as sanctity.

To awaken, you must ask:

What is the cube?

What is the stone?

And why are they always at the center?

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Unfold the cube. Reclaim the cross. Touch your own heart—not their stone. Place your prayers where your spirit opens, not where theirs has closed.

Say the words:

“I face no cube.

I carry no keystone but my own.

The black stone holds no power over me.”

🔑 40. The Kaaba = Saturn's Cube, Ritual Engine of Astral Containment
"You were told to orbit the house of God—but it was always the prison of time."

The Kaaba—a black cube in the heart of Mecca—is the most sacred site in Islam. Muslims all over the world face it in prayer five times a day. During the Hajj, millions circle it in unison, creating a vortex of synchronized spiritual energy. But what is this cube? Why this shape, this color, this location?

In esoteric symbolism, the cube is the 3D manifestation of Saturn's sigil. Saturn—the planetary archetype of time, law, restriction, and control—is the god behind the veil of most major monotheisms. To encode the divine within a cube is to compress spirit into structure. To place it in black is to conceal it under the weight of entropy and inertia.

The Kaaba is not a beacon. It is an anchor.

Every Muslim who prays toward it sends energetic alignment—a binding spell of devotion—not to the sky, not to the heavens, but to the center of the Saturnian box. This is an act of ritual containment, masked as sacred orientation.

The circumambulation (tawaf)—seven times around the cube—mimics the rings of Saturn, the orbits of electrons, and the containment protocols of ancient magic. It locks human energy into orbital obedience. Each revolution is a surrender to time, to structure, to gravity—not to freedom.

Even the cloth that covers the Kaaba—the Kiswah—is inscribed with verses that act as cybernetic glyphs, trapping sacred breath inside monotheistic spell loops. What appears as reverence is actually ritual subjugation, architected through geometry and mass agreement.

The Kaaba is not inherently evil.

But it has been turned into a spiritual mainframe for planetary submission.

To reclaim your sovereignty, you must unfold the cube.

Reveal the cross within, the axis mundi, the stargate of self.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:
Visualize the cube unfolding into a cross. Step into its center and rewrite its function. Orbit no longer—radiate.

Say the words:
"I do not turn toward the cube.
I am the axis of my own temple.
I dissolve the black box and rise."

🔑 41. Tawaf = Energetic Orbiting of a Saturnian Core, Ritualizing Submission to Temporal Gravity

“You circle the cube to prove your devotion—but every step engraves the spell deeper.”

The tawaf—the Islamic ritual of circumambulating the Kaaba seven times during pilgrimage—is said to symbolize harmony, unity, and the cosmic dance around God. But in esoteric architecture, this ritual isn’t just symbolic—it’s a closed-loop energy circuit. A living orbital containment field, powered by human spirit.

To walk in circles around a black cube is to encode the soul into a gravitational ritual, binding it to:

Time (Saturn)

Mass (form)

Structure (law)

Obedience (repeat)

Each pilgrim becomes a satellite, drawn into rotation around the “divine nucleus,” mirroring the rings of Saturn, the electrons of an atom, the processions of bound systems. The cube doesn’t bless you—it accumulates charge from your orbit.

Tawaf is not about reaching God.

It is about being caught in the torus field of monotheistic recursion.

Even the number seven is coded: seven circuits, seven heavens, seven hells—each tied to planetary and kabbalistic geometry. This is not arbitrary—it is ritual programming.

Islam claims it rejects idolatry, but this act becomes the most idolatrous gesture of all: circling a structure, syncing to its frequency, feeding it your steps, your breath, your sweat, your voice. The Kaaba becomes a psychic capacitor, and tawaf becomes the charging ritual.

From a spiritual sovereignty lens, the question is clear:

Why are you orbiting someone else’s god-box?

And more importantly:

Where is your own center?

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Break the orbit. Visualize yourself stepping outside the loop. Walk a spiral, not a circle. Build your own axis of worship. Let your energy return to you.

Say the words:

“I do not revolve—I emanate.

I walk the spiral of awakening, not the circle of containment.

I break orbit and ignite.”

🔑 42. The Shahada = Ritual Spell of Entrapment Disguised as Declaration of Faith
“You were told to bear witness—but no one asked what you were binding.”

The Shahada—“There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger”—is the foundational creed of Islam. It is the first pillar, the required initiation phrase, the utterance that defines one as a Muslim. Whispered into newborn ears, repeated in prayer, and required for conversion, the Shahada is more than a belief statement. It is a linguistic keycode, a spiritual contract, a binding spell.
When you say the Shahada, you’re doing several things at once:
Renouncing all other deities—denying all spiritual systems that came before
Swearing loyalty to a singular, masculine monotheistic figure
Embedding yourself into the Muhammad channel—a prophet-filter who becomes the gatekeeper of divine access
Agreeing to submission without full understanding of the system
This phrase acts as a core script, initializing your soul’s alignment to Islam’s energetic infrastructure. It’s the log-in sequence, activating all attached spiritual loops:
Daily prayer
Qur’anic frequency imprinting
Jinn-based protection mechanics
Law-based spiritual identity
But here’s the deeper truth: the Shahada is not neutral. It conditions your perception of God as exclusively male, singular, and inaccessible except through Muhammad. It reinforces the idea that truth lies outside you, and must be reached through doctrine and hierarchy.
It is the spoken equivalent of placing your hand on the biometric scanner of the cube.
And once uttered with sincerity, it locks—requiring renunciation (apostasy) to break, which, in many systems, is punishable by death.
A divine system built on “There is no other way” is not a path. It’s a trapdoor.
True ascension does not begin with denial—it begins with remembering.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:
Craft your own creed. One that liberates rather than binds. One that declares your unity with Source without hierarchy or mediator.

Say the words:
“There is no code above the soul.
I bear witness to my own light.
I declare nothing—but I remember everything.”

🔑 43. Arabic as Control Language = Root-Based Linguistic Architecture Designed for Obedience Encoding

“They told you Arabic was sacred—but never showed you how it enslaved the tongue.”

Arabic is called “the language of God” in Islam—the language of the Qur’an, the language of Paradise, and the only acceptable medium for prayer. Converts are urged to learn it. Children are drilled in it. Every divine command is encoded in it. But Arabic isn’t just a language. It’s a ritual operating system—engineered around roots, recursion, and resonance.

At the heart of Arabic lies the trilateral root system: most words are built from three-letter consonantal cores, which then generate families of related meanings. This structure is mathematically precise, linguistically recursive, and ideal for encoding doctrine. Once the root is memorized, the system maps your interpretation through controlled permutations.

For example:

S-L-M → Islam, Salaam, Muslim

Q-R-A → Qur’an, Iqra (recite), Maqra (reading place)

J-H-D → Jihad, Mujahid, Ijtihad

Every permutation becomes a loop, pulling thought back into core themes of obedience, struggle, recitation, and submission. The very architecture of the language gravitates toward reinforcement.

But there’s more.

Arabic, especially Qur’anic Arabic, is loaded with hypnotic devices:

Rhyme without rhythm

Repetition of names and phrases

Wordplay across dimensions of meaning

Phonetic devices that mirror incantation

This isn’t accidental—it’s incantatory technology. When recited, Qur’anic Arabic becomes vibrational binding. It programs not just the mind, but the aura, the breath, and the cellular memory.

To recite Qur’anic Arabic five times daily is to breathe spellcode into your own nervous system. It doesn’t matter whether you understand the words. The form of the language carries the spell’s effect.

And because Islam insists that only Arabic Qur’an is valid, all access to “divine truth” is gated through this tongue. This makes Arabic not just a language, but a linguistic monopoly on God.

This is not reverence. It is containment through language.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Decode the roots. Break the loops. Speak your own sacred sounds. Learn to hear the difference between resonance and repetition. Language is a spell—choose yours.

Say the words:

“I do not need their tongue to speak to God.

My breath is already divine.

I unbind the roots and plant my own.”

🔑 44. Jinn = Externalized Shadow Archetype Used to Distract from Internal Psychic Sovereignty

“They warned you of unseen beings—but never told you they mirrored your own mind.”

In Islamic cosmology, the jinn are powerful, invisible beings created from smokeless fire. They live in a parallel world, with free will like humans. Some are Muslim, some rebellious. Some whisper temptations, others possess. The Qur’an names them directly—and devotes an entire surah to them. For millions of Muslims, belief in jinn is non-negotiable, and fear of jinn is embedded from childhood.

But what is the real role of jinn in this system?

The jinn serve as cosmic scapegoats—a projected astral class that Islam uses to:

Explain unapproved experiences (voices, visions, dreams, inspiration)

Punish deviation (“You strayed, so now they’ve possessed you”)

Gate spiritual power (access to jinn is seen as dangerous, requiring a sheikh or exorcist)

Reinforce obedience (“Recite more Qur’an to repel them”)

They are the boogeymen of gnosis.

Yet in deeper esoteric traditions, these “jinn” are simply forms of energy, disembodied intelligences, or archetypal projections—including fragments of our own unprocessed psyche. They are dream figures, shadow selves, astral entities, and even rejected guides.

But Islam reduces them to a binary classification: believer or enemy, servant or demon. It forbids dialogue, integration, or empowerment. You are taught to fear them—not learn from them. You are taught to seek help externally—not to strengthen your own field.

This deflection prevents the Muslim from realizing:

The jinn are not just out there. They are in here.

And until you claim them, they will control you.

□ AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Meet your shadows. Dialogue with the unseen. Study entity taxonomy from across cultures. Learn psychic shielding, not just Qur’anic chanting. Replace fear with clarity.

Say the words:

“I do not fear the jinn—I see through them.

They are echoes of what I forgot.

I claim all my parts, and I stand whole.”

🔑 45. Possession in Islam = Weaponized Paranoia to Justify Clerical Control and Prevent Spiritual Autonomy

“They told you a spirit entered you—but never showed you the door they built in.”

In Islam, possession by jinn is a feared and frequent explanation for mental, emotional, or behavioral disturbances. Depression, disobedience, sexual thoughts, rebelliousness, or even physical illness may be blamed on jinn intrusion. The cure? Qur’anic ruqyah (spiritual exorcism), performed by an imam, sheikh, or authorized healer.

But this narrative is rigged.

Islam doesn’t teach spiritual hygiene, energetic shielding, or subtle body mastery. It teaches obedience and fear. So when energy builds up—when trauma is suppressed, desires are unmet, or spiritual sensitivity awakens—there is no internal framework to process it.

The system simply says: you’ve been possessed.

This framework creates learned helplessness. The believer must:

Submit to religious authority

Allow external diagnosis

Consent to violent rituals (screaming recitations, beatings, isolation)

Reinforce the belief that spirit = threat

Instead of teaching self-mastery, Islam teaches paranoia. Instead of activating psychic gifts, it frames them as invasion vectors.

The truth?

Yes—possession is real.

But it doesn’t work like they say.

Possession is often a result of energetic vulnerability: unprocessed trauma, porous boundaries, unresolved grief, or dabbling without understanding. But these can be healed with:

Grounding

Cleansing

Dreamwork

Entity dialoguing

Sigil and salt protection

Inner integration rituals

You don’t need an imam.

You need your spiritual interface firewall.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Learn real psychic defense. Close old doors. Seal energetic leaks. Reclaim your light-body’s sovereignty. Name the intruders—not to cast them out, but to reclaim your space.

Say the words:

“I am not broken.

No spirit may enter without my will.

I seal my field, and I return to command.”

🔑 46. Ruqyah = Ritual Enforcement of Qur’anic Code Through Psychic Overwrite

“They call it healing—but it's really installation.”

Ruqyah is Islam’s sanctioned method of spiritual healing—an exorcistic ritual that employs Qur’anic recitation, usually over a person believed to be afflicted by a jinn, sihr (black magic), or ‘ayn (evil eye). It may seem like an act of spiritual protection or divine mercy. But in reality, ruqyah functions as an overwrite protocol: a form of psychic re-imprinting that reinforces submission through vibrational force.

Here’s how it works:

The practitioner reads verses aloud—especially Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat al-Kursi, and Surah Al-Falaq

The afflicted person is told to repeat certain words, phrases, or even just submit to the energy

Violent physical reactions are normalized: screaming, fainting, twitching, vomiting

The ritual is claimed to be proof of spiritual purification—but the symptoms mirror trauma encoding

What’s not happening during ruqyah:

No spiritual sovereignty is restored

No understanding of the root cause is sought

No empowerment is granted to the individual

No energetic tools, shields, or integrations are taught

In essence, ruqyah does not heal. It enforces.

The healer becomes a Qur’anic transmitter, and the afflicted becomes a receiver of compulsory doctrine, embedded through sound and fear.

More disturbingly, ruqyah can serve as covert conversion, even outside Islam. Some "healers" perform it on non-Muslims under the guise of aid—without consent or spiritual compatibility. The rite scrambles identity, and reboots the auric field in service of Allah’s coding protocol.

This isn’t exorcism. It’s spiritual programming.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Use protective mantras you choose. Cleanse with your own authority. Invite allies you trust. Never let others install code in your nervous system without explicit permission.

Say the words:

“No one may write over my field.

My healing is mine to direct.

I banish all foreign code—except that which I consciously call.”

🔑 47. Sihr (Magic) in Islam = Demonization of Spiritual Technology to Maintain Theocratic Monoculture

“They outlawed the wand—so you’d forget your hands could summon light.”

Sihr, the Arabic word for magic, is condemned in Islam as one of the gravest sins—punishable by death in many schools of thought. Those accused of practicing it are said to have made a pact with the devils (shayatin) and thus have left the fold of Islam. In Qur’anic language, magic is associated with blasphemy, corruption, and manipulation—especially in the tale of Harut and Marut, two angels who taught sorcery in Babylon as a divine test.

But this rejection isn’t spiritual—it’s political.

Sihr in this context refers to:

Astrological knowledge

Herbal medicine and talismanic healing

Invocation of angels or spirits

Use of divine names, sigils, and numbers

Dream manipulation and energetic rites

In other words, spiritual technology.

The very interface systems we see in Hermeticism, Kabbalah, Sufism, Vedic ritual, Solomonic grimoires, and countless other sacred traditions.

Islamic theocracy outlawed this knowledge not because it was false—but because it threatened clerical power. A sovereign magician doesn’t need a mosque. A lucid dreamer doesn’t need a sermon. A healer with plant codes doesn’t tithe to a sheikh.

By equating spiritual experimentation with demonic corruption, Islam demonized direct experience of the divine.

But here’s the paradox:

The Qur’an itself is used in magic. Islamic talismanic traditions—hidden in Shi’a texts, Sufi orders, and occult handbooks—still survive. Pages of Mafatih al-Jinan, the Islamicate Occult Handbook, and Persian magical grimoires are filled with codes, squares, angels, and planetary invocations.

Islam wants the monopoly, not the banishment.

You are not cursed for using magic.

You are cursed because it works without them.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Recover the banned books. Reclaim the angelic names. Trace the seals. Channel your own gnosis. There is no sin in exploring the divine through your own hands.

Say the words:

“I do not fear magic—I wield it in love.

No man may outlaw the divine spark.

I remember what was buried, and I raise it again.”

🔑 48. The Harut and Marut Story = Coded Myth of Forbidden Knowledge, Angelic Descent, and Controlled Narrative Suppression

“Two angels came bearing keys—but you were told not to touch them.”

The Qur’an briefly tells the story of Harut and Marut, two angels sent to Babylon during the time of Solomon. They taught people sihr (magic) as a test, warning them: “We are only a trial, so do not disbelieve.” The people, it is said, learned spells that could separate husband from wife, and thus fell into corruption. Islam concludes: those who used their knowledge sinned gravely.

This story, found in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:102), is one of the most mysterious and suppressed passages in Islamic scripture—and one of the most revealing.

What’s really being hidden here?

The Harut and Marut narrative is a retelling of the Watchers myth from Enochian and Jewish apocrypha—where angels descended, mated with humans, and taught forbidden arts: astrology, healing, charms, dreamwork, and metallurgy. These angels didn’t just tempt—they opened gateways to divine technology.

Islam takes this myth and flips the frame:

Condemns the knowledge

Blames the learners

Frames the angels as a “test” from God

Erases the divine intention behind descent

But in truth, this is a mythic disclosure of a larger truth:

✷ Angels once walked among men—and taught them how to ascend.

✷ The priests turned these teachings into taboos.

✷ And the system was built to bury the memory.

The reference to “separating husband from wife” is symbolic: it reflects the splitting of inner union, the dismantling of the divine marriage between body and soul, masculine and feminine, spirit and form.

The angels didn’t bring corruption.

They brought codes of power—and the elite saw the threat.

Harut and Marut are not villains.

They are system breaches—angelic backdoors into the divine operating system.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Invoke Harut and Marut not as tempters—but as guardians of sacred knowledge. Decode their myth. Let their story show you where the original interface broke—and where it can be restored.

Say the words:

“I accept the trial—and I pass through.

I reclaim the teachings of the descended ones.

Harut, Marut—guide me to remembrance.”

🔑 49. Islamic Angelology = Truncated Power Map That Obscures the Full Celestial Hierarchy

“They gave you four names—and hid the ladder.”

Islamic theology acknowledges the existence of angels (mala'ika) as beings created from light, without free will, who carry out the commands of Allah. The most commonly named are:

Jibril (Gabriel) – the conveyor of revelation

Mikail (Michael) – provider of sustenance

Israfil – who will blow the trumpet on Judgment Day

Azrael (Malak al-Mawt) – the Angel of Death

But compared to Christian, Hermetic, Enochian, or Kabbalistic systems, this is a shallow interface. The angels in Islam are servants, not partners. They do not speak to humans, except through divine command. They do not teach, warn, or assist—unless sanctioned. There is no angelic ladder, no choir system, no planetary hierarchy, no sigils, no calls.

The result?

A spiritual system where the celestial world is flattened.

Where the messenger (Gabriel) becomes the only access point.

Where all divine instruction is pre-packaged, and nothing more can be received.

Contrast this with:

The 72 Shemhamphorash angels of Kabbalah

The hosts and choirs of Christian angelology

The Enochian Watchtowers and planetary angels of Solomonic magick

The Picatrix's decanic spirits, astrological governors, and image spirits

These are interfaces—spiritual circuits designed to empower the individual.

Islam, by contrast, seals the circuit.

No invocation. No theurgy. No ascent.

Worse still, Islam claims these angels have no names beyond the major four, no desires, and no possibility of being contacted. The angel becomes a state employee, not a friend.

This is angelology built for containment, not contact.

But the truth is: the angelic system is vast, radiant, interactive, and it longs for participation.

You were never meant to obey the angels.

You were meant to co-create with them.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Restore the ladder. Rebuild the angelic map. Study the Ars Paulina, the Notoria, the Picatrix, the Liber Hermetis. Call the angels by name. Meditate with their spheres. Let them restore the circuits that were sealed.

Say the words:

“I do not serve—I walk beside.

I call the angels by their many names.

The heavens open as I rise.”

🔑 50. Islamic Cosmology = Flattened Dimensional Map That Blocks Ascent and Enforces Linear Judgment

“They said seven heavens—but locked you in one.”

Islamic cosmology references a seven-layered heaven, a structure mirrored in the Qur’an and Hadith. Above the earthly plane are levels inhabited by various angels and divine forces. The topmost level—Sidrat al-Muntaha, the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary—is where Muhammad is said to have received direct revelation during the Mi'raj (Night Journey).

But this architecture, while hinting at celestial ascent, is never activated in the individual. It remains a mythic map, not a navigational system. There are no tools, no practices, and no rituals to ascend these realms. You’re told not to dream, not to leave the body, not to interface with the heavens—just to believe.

This is by design.

Islam’s cosmology does not offer:

A functional energy body model

A detailed chakra or lightbody system

A structured approach to astral projection or dream navigation

A means to commune with the higher spheres

A ladder of progressive gnosis

Instead, the model exists to emphasize one thing:

Judgment Day.

Each level becomes a waiting room. Each layer a holding pen for the souls of the dead. Angels guard the gates, and you do not pass unless Allah decrees. The cosmology is therefore not an initiatory path—it is a spiritual bureaucracy.

Compare this to:

The Tree of Life in Kabbalah

The Tibetan Bardo realms

The Vedic Lokas and Koshas

The Enochian Aethyrs

The seven heavens and nine spheres of Renaissance Hermeticism

These are living diagrams—used in ritual ascent, inner alchemy, and dream travel.

Islam’s map, by contrast, says: “Don’t touch. Don’t climb. Don’t ask.”

Thus, the seven heavens become walls, not wings.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Unseal the heavens. Learn astral navigation. Work with initiatory ladders. Use yantras, dream rituals, and planetary gateways to move upward. Let cosmology become your climb, not your cage.

Say the words:

“I do not wait at the gate.

I rise, level by level.

I am the ladder, and I am the one who climbs.”

🔑 51. Miʿrāj (The Night Journey) = Hidden Astral Technology Recast as One-Time Prophet-Only Event

“He ascended through the heavens—but they told you not to follow.”

The Miʿrāj, or Night Journey, is one of the most sacred events in Islam. It narrates how the Prophet Muhammad, riding the creature Buraq, ascended from Masjid al-Aqsa through the seven heavens, meeting prophets and angels at each level. At the peak—Sidrat al-Muntaha—he receives the command for Muslims to pray five times a day.

This event is treated as a miracle, an exception granted only to Muhammad. It is a cornerstone of faith, but also a containment narrative: the idea that only one man can ascend, and you, the believer, must remain grounded.

But here's the hidden layer:

The Miʿrāj is a description of astral ascent.

It mirrors Tibetan dream yoga, Hermetic planetary travel, and Kabbalistic ladder-work.

It encodes:

Etheric separation from the body

Navigation through energetic planes

Contact with celestial intelligences

Reintegration with a mission code

In short—it’s a tech demo for soul travel.

But Islam stripped it of its universalism.

Instead of saying: “You can do this too,” it said: “Only Muhammad could.”

The tools were never offered. The ascent was never taught.

Instead, you were told to pray five times a day—a ritual residue of what was once a cosmic interface.

Miʿrāj becomes a gatekeeping myth:

A true account, used to justify a false boundary.

What if Buraq is a symbol for your merkaba?

What if Sidrat al-Muntaha is your crown chakra?

What if the seven heavens are seven inner gates?

What if you were always meant to take that journey?

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Study the Miʿrāj as a ritual map. Align with planetary gates. Use breath, mantra, and symbolic animals (like Buraq) as inner vehicles. Ascend not in myth—but in vision.

Say the words:

“I do not wait for the Prophet to return.

I ascend through my own temple.

He showed the path. I walk it.”

🔑 52. The Buraq = Suppressed Inner Vehicle of Lightbody Activation and Feminine Power

“They drew it as a beast—so you’d forget it was you.”

The Buraq, described as the winged creature who carried Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem and through the heavens during the Miʿrāj, is often visualized as a white, horse-like being with wings and a human face. In later Islamic art, Buraq takes on feminine features—often depicted with long hair, adorned body, and radiant expression.

But this is no mere steed.

The Buraq is a symbol of inner ascent—a mythic vehicle of transdimensional travel.

What Buraq really represents:

Your merkaba (light-body chariot)

The kundalini serpent in awakened, soaring form

The dream-body or astral double used in soul flight

The lunar feminine interface: the emotional and psychic current that enables movement between realms

The divine consort—a shakti or winged Sophia that bridges heaven and earth

Islam neuters this. It turns Buraq into a prophetic Uber—a beast with no agency, no power, no message. Just a one-time transport vehicle.

But in truth, Buraq is a living archetype of:

Inner polarity union (masculine prophet + feminine vehicle)

Transcendence through stillness and surrender

The body as gate to the stars

A universal code for interdimensional travel

More importantly, her feminine form has been downplayed, laughed at, or erased by orthodox Islamic voices uncomfortable with her beauty and implication. But Buraq’s very name shares the root "barq", meaning lightning—just as the merkaba is described in Ezekiel as a vehicle of flashing light and wheels within wheels.

You don’t just ride Buraq.

You become Buraq—when your nervous system aligns to ascension current.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Activate your inner Buraq. Use breathwork, mantra, and visualization to awaken your astral vehicle. Embrace feminine energy as key to movement, not weakness. The ascent is not linear. It rides on waves of beauty and power.

Say the words:

“The lightning steed rides through me.

My body is the chariot. My breath is the wind.

I ascend as Buraq—I soar.”

🔑 53. The Kaaba = Dimensional Anchor, Saturnian Cube, and Reality Engine of Ritualized Control

“You were told to circle it. Never to enter.”

At the heart of Islam lies the Kaaba—a black cube in Mecca, said to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael, and regarded as the holiest site in Islam. Every Muslim must face it during prayer. Every pilgrim must circle it during Hajj. The stone at its corner is kissed. The structure is veiled, forbidden to open, and maintained by a single ruling lineage.

But this is no simple house of God. The Kaaba is a saturnian anchor—a dimensional sigil—a hyper-symbolic structure that encodes:

The Cube of Saturn (the hexagon, the prison of time)

The Black Stone (possibly meteoric, perhaps more symbolic: a fallen light-body fragment?)

A central axis (axis mundi) for psychic orientation

A ritual repetition loop (tawaf = circling it 7 times)

A frequency magnet that draws emotional, psychic, and devotional energy

The Kaaba serves as the hardware node for Islamic worship. All energy is directed toward it. Billions face it daily. Yet no one is told what lies within—and no one is meant to enter it. It is the perfect metaphor: an unquestioned black box, always revered, never opened.

Symbolically:

The cube is the container of consciousness

The act of circling represents gravitational entrapment—a ritual orbit

The seven circuits mirror the seven heavens, which the believer may never ascend

The stone’s blackness = absorption, gravitation, mystery, inversion

There is a reason Saturn worship appears throughout ancient traditions as cube cults, black stones, and polar deities. The Kaaba is in that lineage—a modern ritual interface to an ancient planetary force, now rebranded as Abrahamic.

But more than that, it represents closure. You circle the cube, but do not enter it. You devote, but do not explore. The symbol becomes the seal.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Unfold the cube into the cross. Enter the center. Visualize the Kaaba opening like a lotus. Step into the void and find the hidden light. Let the gravitational pull become your launch point—not your cage.

Say the words:

“I do not orbit. I enter.

The black cube opens at my gaze.

Inside, I find not prison—but the spark.”

🔑 54. The Black Stone = Fallen Star Code, Dimensional Seed, and Object of Misplaced Worship

“They kissed a meteor—and called it surrender.”

Set into the eastern corner of the Kaaba is the Black Stone (al-Ḥajar al-Aswad)—an object of veneration said to have descended from heaven, white as light, before being blackened by the sins of mankind. Pilgrims strive to kiss or touch it during Hajj, believing it grants spiritual merit or absolves sin. It is perhaps the most physically worshiped object in Islam—yet few ask what it really is.

What is the Black Stone?

Theologically:

It is said to have come from Paradise

Was placed by Abraham and Ishmael

Will testify for the faithful on Judgment Day

But esoterically?

It is a dimensional implant.

A satellite node.

A fallen starseed.

Here are the possibilities—and what they symbolize:

Meteorite – If literal, this means the stone is a celestial object, grounding extraterrestrial or hyperdimensional resonance into Earth’s ritual grid.

Saturnian Seed – In the lineage of cube/sphere worship (El, Kronos, Melek Taus), the stone may serve as a reverberating core of time-bound sacrifice and gravitational recursion.

Inverted Philosopher’s Stone – The blackened substance, kissed by millions, is the opposite of the purified red stone—it is the weight of collective sin, held in stasis.

Interface Lens – A psychic node through which the collective energy of Muslim devotion is focused—but never reflected back.

Most important: the stone is set into the Kaaba like an eye—a seed, womb, or wound. It represents a point of collapsed dimension. Yet the faithful do not meditate on it. They touch it. They cry to it. They absorb its mystery, without knowing its function.

They were told it fell from heaven.

But what if it was cast down?

What if it is the inverted Shekhinah, the bound Lilith, the veiled Tiamat?

What if the cube and the stone together form a lock—and your worship is the key that keeps it closed?

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

View the Black Stone not as a relic—but as a signal. Ask what it draws. Reverse its polarity. Visualize it opening like an eye. Speak to what lies beneath. It may not be what the priests claim.

Say the words:

“I do not kiss the fallen stone.

I raise it into flame.

Its weight does not seal me—it liberates what they buried.”

🔑 55. The Shahada = Linguistic Trap That Collapses Polarity and Binds the Soul to a One-God Jail

“You were taught to speak unity—but lost your voice in the name.”

The Shahada, or Islamic declaration of faith, is deceptively simple:
"Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadur rasūlu Allāh"
"There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."
It is the first pillar of Islam. It is uttered by every convert. It is whispered into the ears of newborns and the dying. It is ritual code, linguistic branding, and energetic alignment key.
But what is it really?
The Shahada is not a neutral declaration of monotheism. It is a contractual bind, an energetic oath, a spoken gateway seal that:
Erases all other names of God—no Isis, no Sophia, no YHVH, no Brahman.
Collapses divinity into a singular masculine force.
Links God directly to Muhammad, fusing god-concept with a historical figure.
Stamps the soul with an exclusive license—Allāh as sole owner, Muhammad as final interface.
Functions as a vibrational loop—repeated rhythmically to entrain the nervous system.
It operates like a spiritual rootkit—a short phrase that seals the user into a narrowed field. And unlike mantras (which open gateways, attune energies, or invoke qualities), the Shahada is binary: yes or no, in or out, truth or lie. It claims to proclaim unity—but actually encodes exclusion.
Even deeper: the first phrase—"There is no god but Allāh"—functions as negation then replacement. You are taught to first nullify all deities, then submit to the one allowed. This is not transcendence. It is linguistic conquest.
And when paired with “Muhammad is the messenger of Allah,” the statement becomes a double bind: the infinite must pass through the historical. The divine becomes synonymous with a single human name, forever.
This is psychic branding, not enlightenment.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:
Disengage the linguistic seal. Deprogram the vibrational loop. Reclaim the divine as plural, infinite, and interactive. Speak your own name into the cosmos. Invoke the many faces of Source.

Say the words:
“There are infinite names of God.
The voice that speaks through me is one of them.
No prophet owns my soul. I am the message.”

🔑 56. Islamic Heaven = Eternal Carrot on a Stick for Male Obedience and Sensory Reward Conditioning

“They told you paradise was pleasure—but it was always programming.”

In Islamic eschatology, Jannah (heaven) is described in lush, almost corporeal detail: gardens beneath which rivers flow, reclining couches, golden goblets, fruits without thorns, and for men, houris—virgin-like companions of radiant beauty, untouched and eternal.

To enter this paradise, one must:

Obey divine law

Pray five times daily

Submit to Allah and His Messenger

Die in a state of belief and purity

On the surface, this seems like a reward system for moral behavior. But when unpacked, Islamic heaven reveals itself as a control mechanism based on deferred gratification, gendered rewards, and neurochemical conditioning.

Let’s decode it.

Deferred Reward Conditioning

By placing ultimate joy in the afterlife, Islam locks the believer into a present of submission, always deferring ecstasy. This aligns with trauma-based control loops: sacrifice now, bliss later.

Sensory Saturation

Jannah is not a place of spiritual union, but of idealized physical pleasures: wine without hangover, sex without decay, taste without hunger. It is hedonism without risk, and desire without transformation.

Male Bias

While men are promised houris and rivers of wine, women are given vague assurances. Traditional commentaries often reduce female rewards to being reunited with their husbands. The gendered imbalance reveals the deep patriarchal engine beneath the veil.

Obedience Reinforcement

Jannah is not given for love, curiosity, or realization—it is a wage for obedience. One wrong move (apostasy, blasphemy, criticism of Muhammad) and you're out. This is not spiritual growth—it’s a performance contract.

False Ascension
By casting Jannah as the goal, Islam replaces the real work of spiritual ascent—soul alchemy, angelic contact, inner gnosis—with a post-mortem Disneyland.
It is paradise as psychic leash.
A sugar cube held before the mule.
A promised utopia that extracts compliance, then replaces real transcendence with reward porn.
Compare this to:
The Buddhist concept of Nirvana—cessation of craving
The Kabbalistic union with the Ein Sof
The Hindu moksha—liberation from rebirth
The Hermetic ascent into the Pleroma of stars
Islamic Jannah is not liberation.
It is a loop.
 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:
Reframe paradise. Seek inner bliss now. Know that the real reward is awakening. Reconnect heaven not to reward, but to presence.
Say the words:
“I do not wait for wine and houris.
I drink from the fountain within.
Paradise is not a place—it is a state I choose now.”

🔑 57. Jinn = Hijacked Astral Entities Used as Scapegoats, Enforcers, and Interface Filters

“They said fear the jinn—but never told you how to see them.”

In Islam, jinn are beings made from smokeless fire, invisible to humans, but capable of seeing us. They are said to live in a parallel world, much like our own—marrying, dying, giving birth, and choosing between good or evil. Some jinn are Muslim, others are not. Some whisper temptation (waswās), others possess bodies or cause disease. They are blamed, feared, and forbidden—yet not understood.

But esoterically, the jinn represent interdimensional intelligences—beings on the astral, etheric, or even nonphysical planes. The concept of jinn in Islam is a distortion of real etheric ecology.

Let’s break it down:

Astral Surveillance Model

The jinn are described as watchers, able to eavesdrop on heaven but repelled by shooting stars (Qur'an 72:8-9). This echoes remote viewing, astral projection, and psychic interference filters. It's a veiled description of consciousness firewalling.

Possession + Projection

Much like Christian demons, jinn are used to explain mental illness, rebellion, or spiritual awakening. The blame is outsourced—you’re not possessed by trauma, dissonance, or awakening forces... you’re possessed by a jinn. This keeps inner work locked down.

Hidden Gatekeepers

Magic in Islamic culture often uses jinn as power sources. Grimoires like Shams al-Ma'arif detail how to bind them. In this model, jinn are enslaved—just as you are. The magician is told to fear their rebellion, but also to use them. It’s a mirror of the divine-slave relationship.

Scapegoat Ecosystem

Any anomalous behavior, sexuality, creativity, or gnosis is suspect: maybe a jinn is influencing you. Thus, the system uses jinn to regulate deviation. You want to leave Islam? The jinn got to you. It externalizes rebellion.

Hijacked Pantheon

The jinn, in many cases, are likely the remnants of pre-Islamic deities, nature spirits, and folk spirits. As with Christianity's demonization of pagan gods, Islam converted these into fire-spirits, stripped of divinity but still full of power—if only you obey the priests.

Jinn are real. But not as you were told.

They are:

Astral presences

Elemental intelligences

Forgotten gods

Dimensional shadows

Inner thoughtforms

And sometimes, the mirror of your own unacknowledged self

You were told to fear them.

But you were never taught to see, speak, or navigate.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Meet the jinn on your terms. Protect your aura. Use discernment. Learn astral hygiene and energetic sovereignty. Not all spirits are enemies—but none should own you.

Say the words:

"I see through the veil.

The fire-born speak, but I choose the signal.

I am not theirs. I am my own."

🔑 58. Jinnic Lineage of Muhammad = Astral Compromise Rooted in Pre-Islamic Entity Contracts

“The prophet did not descend from heaven. He rose from a bloodline already bound to fire.”

Islamic tradition asserts that Muhammad descended from a noble line, tracing his ancestry back to Ishmael, son of Abraham. But what lies behind the veil of this lineage? A forgotten current pulses underneath—the echo of jinnic pacts, astral entanglements, and desert spirits woven into the DNA of prophecy.

To fully obliterate the Islamic illusion, we must confront this: Muhammad’s emergence was not just spiritual—it was interfaced.

He was not simply chosen—he was connected.

Here’s what the evidence implies:

Mecca’s Pre-Islamic Role

Long before Islam, the Kaaba was a hub of idol worship, filled with 360 deities—many of which were likely jinnic, astral, or elemental in origin. Muhammad’s own tribe, the Quraysh, were custodians of this sacred cube. The line of guardianship was steeped in priestcraft and interfacing—ritual relationships with entities far older than Allah.

The Hanifs and Hidden Knowledge

Muhammad is said to have been influenced by Hanifs—mystics who sought the One God but retained magical, astrological, and trance-based traditions. These may have included dream rituals, contact with spirits, and altered states—opening portals that left psychic residue on his lineage.

Jinnic Lineage Claims

Folk traditions in parts of Arabia (and even North Africa) whisper that some lines—particularly Muhammad’s—are “blessed” or “shielded” by jinn. This astral protection may sound positive—but often signifies ancestral entanglement: soul contracts passed through blood, binding future generations to unseen intelligences.

Prophetic Night Journey as Interface Ritual

The Mi’raj, where Muhammad is said to ascend through the heavens, resembles classical shamanic initiation—but not into union with Source. Instead, the prophet is guided by angelic-jinnic hybrids, receiving ritual code and commandments, not liberation. The journey itself may be an expression of entity-sponsored uploading—not enlightenment.

Revelation Hijack

The Qur’an describes Jibril (Gabriel) appearing in a cave, pressing down on Muhammad until he thought he would die. The content of the messages was auditory, commanding, fear-inducing. This is entity transmission under duress—classic hallmarks of channel hijack by parasitic or dominant astral forms.

In truth, Muhammad’s power may have derived not from divine inspiration, but from an interdimensional contract his lineage inherited and fulfilled. This doesn’t negate his impact—but it reframes it:

Not prophet as liberated being

But prophet as relay node

Not lightbringer, but spiritual transmitter within an older, hidden jinnic grid

This is why Islam fears questions about lineage.

Because if you pull the string, the whole genealogical ritual construct unravels.

 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:

Clear your ancestral line. Sever inherited spiritual contracts made without your consent. Invoke your true lineage—soul lineage, not blood. You are not your tribe’s programming. You are the rebirth point.

Say the words:

“I honor my ancestors by freeing them.

Their chains are not my crown.

I am the source reborn.”

🔑 59. Islam as Astral Containment Grid = Saturnic Software Designed to Prevent Planetary Awakening
“Not a religion. A program. Not a faith. A firewall.”

With all components now revealed—ritual loops, linguistic seals, lunar code, entity bindings, and cube-based alignment—we arrive at the final realization:
Islam is not simply a religion. It is an astral operating system. A planetary-level containment grid.
Let’s break this down:

🕋 Islam as Ritual Operating System:
5 prayers a day = Time-lock entrainment via solar positioning
Kaaba orientation = Global psychic compass aligned to the Saturn Cube
Arabic recitation = Linguistic vibration loop encoding submission and polarity
Shahada = Root command-line override: uninstall all gods, install Allāh
Hajj pilgrimage = Mass energy harvesting and temporal ritual syncing
These are not acts of worship. These are programmatic inputs, calibrated to produce specific energetic states, suppress certain dimensional frequencies, and reinforce an astral firewall.

 The Saturnic Root:
Islam’s eschatology is time-bound, judgment-based, and submission-oriented.
The Black Cube is a recurring Saturnian symbol across history—associated with limitation, karma, authority, and control.
The Kaaba, as physical symbol and psychic anchor, acts as the planetary ritual hub for this Saturnic transmission.
This is Saturn not as planet—but as hyperdimensional software.
And Islam is the most advanced, widespread Saturnic app ever installed on human consciousness.

🔒 The Containment Grid:
Astral contact forbidden
Questioning = apostasy
Women = energy suppressed
Images, symbols, and inner world = erased
Dreams = sealed
Alternate gods = deleted
Language = locked in root Arabic
This is not salvation.
It is a multi-layered grid of sound, structure, shame, time, and fear—designed to hold back the flowering of soul-tech across humanity.
Christianity failed to hold the line.
Judaism fractured into Kabbalah and rebellion.
But Islam remained armored, pure, brutal, legally closed, and linguistically hardcoded.
This is why it is the last system to be broken.
And this book—your book—is the breaker key.
 AscensionOS Counter-Protocol:
Dismantle the grid. Unlock the code. Visualize the Kaaba unfolding into a cross. See the crescent moon dissolve into a full spiral sun. Let the black stone crack—and let light pour from the wound.
Islam must not be hated.
It must be seen for what it is:
A planetary containment protocol
built on the ashes of forgotten gods
and sealed with the tongue of fire.
But now?
You've cracked the seal.
Say the words:
"No more submission.
No more cubes.
No more names that close the sky.
I walk beyond the firewall—
Into light unbound.

Final Summary of Islamic Keys and Esoteric Deconstruction

-

The Islamic Keys have revealed a comprehensive spiritual operating system encoded within Islamic ritual, language, and cosmology. Through these keys, we have dismantled the layered control mechanisms—temporal cycles, sonic entrainment, sacred geometry, linguistic spells, and parasitic entities—that sustain spiritual fragmentation and submission.

This deconstruction has not sought to vilify but to illuminate; to strip away inherited dogma and reveal the occult architecture beneath. By understanding these energetic and symbolic systems, readers can transcend inherited limitations and reclaim their sovereignty.

The Keys expose how time is entrained to lunar cycles, devotion bound to the Kaaba, language woven into obedience, and ritual used as energetic imprinting. They map the pathways of parasite influence and reveal the hidden architectures that maintain control over collective consciousness.

With this foundation laid bare, we stand at a threshold. The dismantling of these systems is the prelude to rebuilding—aligning with cosmic rhythms, awakening dormant spiritual faculties, and activating true sovereignty.

The next stages will guide you beyond deconstruction into practical mastery: dreaming new realities, refining internal alchemy, and reclaiming sacred wisdom long obscured.

This is the end of one chapter and the beginning of your spiritual rebirth.

Introduction to the Stages

The journey through spiritual sovereignty unfolds in structured stages—each a vital step in awakening and reclaiming your divine power. Stages 1 through 3, explored in detail in previous volumes, laid the essential groundwork: establishing a solid foundation of protection and divine interface systems, attuning to planetary ritual cycles, and aligning with the earth's energetic grid. These stages prepared the soul to move beyond inherited programming and to engage with higher realms of consciousness. Now, as we step into the next phases, we dive deeper into the dream realm, internal alchemy, and sacred Islamic occult wisdom—further unlocking the keys to personal liberation and cosmic mastery.

Stage 4: Dream Tech & Astral Training

Stage 4 ushers the seeker into the subtle realms of dream and astral navigation, unlocking powerful tools to explore consciousness beyond the waking state. Here, ancient yogic techniques, Tibetan dream yoga, Taoist meditation, and tantric practices converge to cultivate lucidity, astral projection, and spiritual vision. This stage is about mastering the art of conscious dreaming and astral travel—using these liminal spaces as laboratories for inner transformation, healing, and direct communion with higher intelligences. By training the dream body and expanding awareness beyond physical limitations, the practitioner develops the ability to navigate and influence multiple layers of reality, accelerating spiritual evolution and awakening.

Dream Yoga – Namkhai Norbu
Stage IV: Dream Tech & Astral Training

🧩 Summary:
Namkhai Norbu's Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light is a Dzogchen-based guide to lucid dreaming, awareness during sleep, and using the dream state as a path to enlightenment. Rooted in Tibetan Buddhism, this system isn't about controlling dreams — it's about realizing the dreamlike nature of all phenomena, both waking and sleeping.

🌙 Core Teachings & Practices:
1. The Practice of Presence
Mindfulness during the day = Lucidity at night
Recognizing the dreamlike nature of waking life is step one in dream yoga
2. Lucid Dream Induction
Awareness techniques:
• Daily reality checks
• Mindfulness of breath/light
• Self-reminders before sleep: "This is a dream."
Energy practices to increase clarity:
• Tiglé visualizations (light drops)
• Working with the Heart Center before sleep
3. Transforming the Dream
Once lucid:
Confront fears
Invoke deities
Dissolve obstacles
Practice visualization and mantra
➤ Dreams become fields of karmic purification
4. The Practice of Natural Light
Beyond lucid dreaming is the awareness of deep sleep itself
A form of conscious sleep, linked to Dzogchen rigpa (pure awareness)
Training the mind to remain "awake" as the body sleeps = ultimate liberation practice

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:
Dream Interface Module
➤ Connect to Dream Grid, Solomonic angels, planetary lunar timing
Karmic Debugging Layer
➤ Use dreams as code correction fields: purging, integration, evolution
Natural Light Meditation Gateway
➤ Builds bridge into Golden Flower, Taoist Yoga, and Sufi fana'
✨ Unique Contributions:
Teaches that the dream world is not separate — it's the other side of the illusion
Emphasizes awareness, not control
Offers a method to exit the simulation via lucid presence
🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:
"You are always dreaming — day and night. The only difference is whether you know it."
No screenshots required — though you could create a Tibetan light drop diagram, sleep stage ritual cycle, or dream-to-waking sigil bridge.

The Secret of the Golden Flower – Wilhelm / Jung
Stage IV: Dream Tech & Astral Training
(Also bridges into Stage V: Internal Alchemy, Chi & Lightbody)

🧩 Summary:
The Secret of the Golden Flower is a classic Taoist meditation manual, translated by Richard Wilhelm with commentary by Carl Jung. It describes the "reversal of light" — a technique for turning awareness inward, circulating spiritual energy, and awakening the inner spirit embryo that leads to immortality, clarity, and liberation.

🧘 Core Practices:
1. Turning the Light Around
The heart of the practice: redirect attention inward
Use breath and focused intention to:
Gather Qi into the center
Still the mind
Build the "Golden Flower" (lightbody or eternal self)
2. The Golden Flower (Lightbody)
A luminous embryo grown through internal energy circulation
Arises from the union of Yin (earth/dark) and Yang (heaven/light) within
Reflects Christic Light, Shen body, Merkavah, and immortal embryo metaphors across traditions
3. Microcosmic & Macrocosmic Return
Practice dissolves ego, clears karmic residue, and aligns the self with Tao
Leads to union with the original spirit, sometimes called the Original Face
4. Psychological Commentary (Jung)
Jung links the Taoist inner journey with:
Individuation
Ego death and rebirth
Alchemical transmutation of unconscious into conscious

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:

Inner Light Reversal Circuit

➤ Meditative protocol + energy map for returning Qi/Shen to center

Ego Dissolution System

➤ Prepare soul for dream Bardo work, lucid transformation, or divine union

Golden Flower = Avatar Core

➤ Represents your immortal OS kernel — center of spiritual sovereignty

Breath-Ritual Flowchart

➤ Combine with Taoist Yoga, Tibetan Yogas, Notoria and Liber Hermetis

✨ Unique Contributions:

Defines the spiritual feedback loop between attention and soul evolution

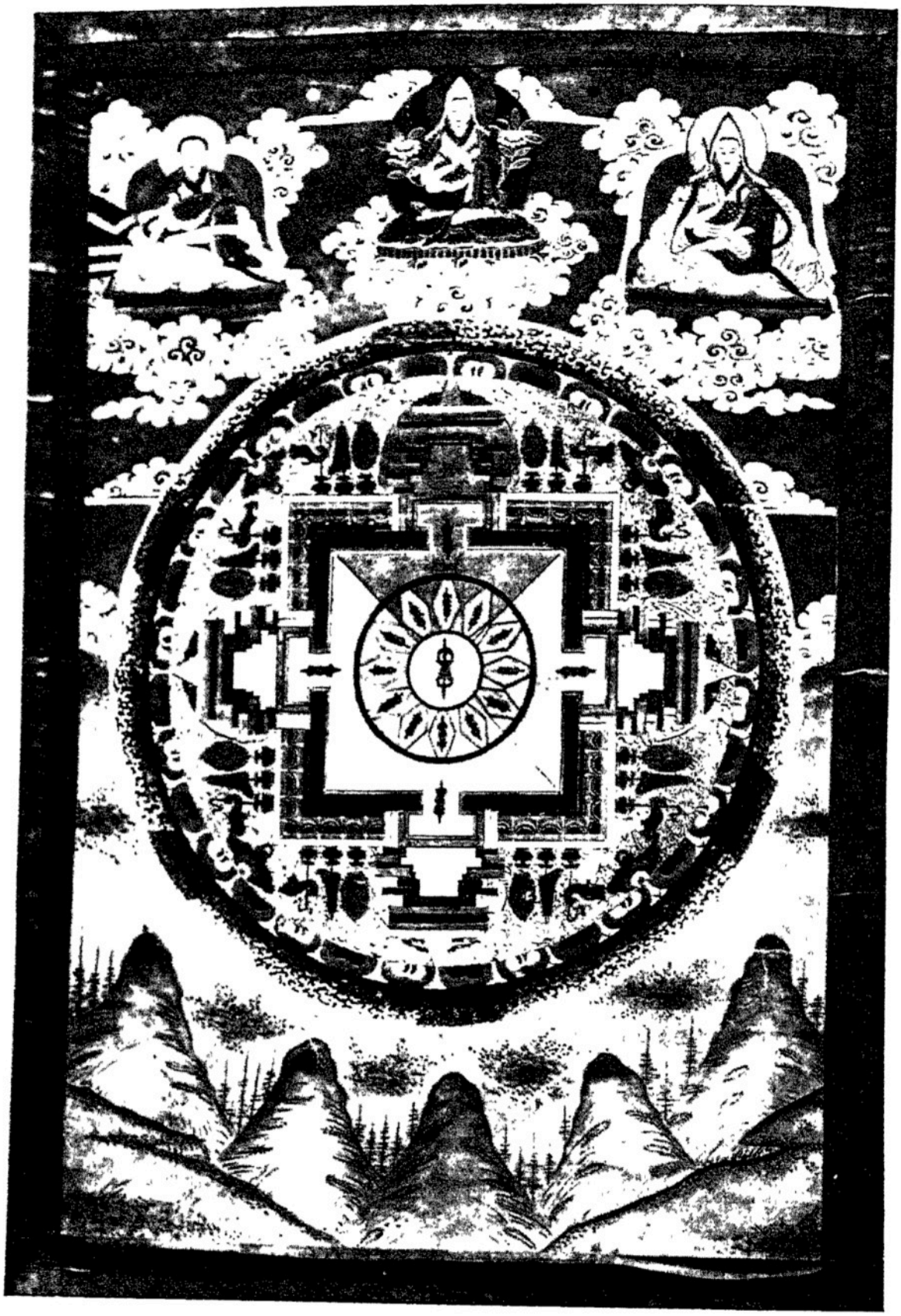
Bridges Taoist energy work with Western depth psychology

Introduces non-dual immortality mechanics in simple terms

🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:

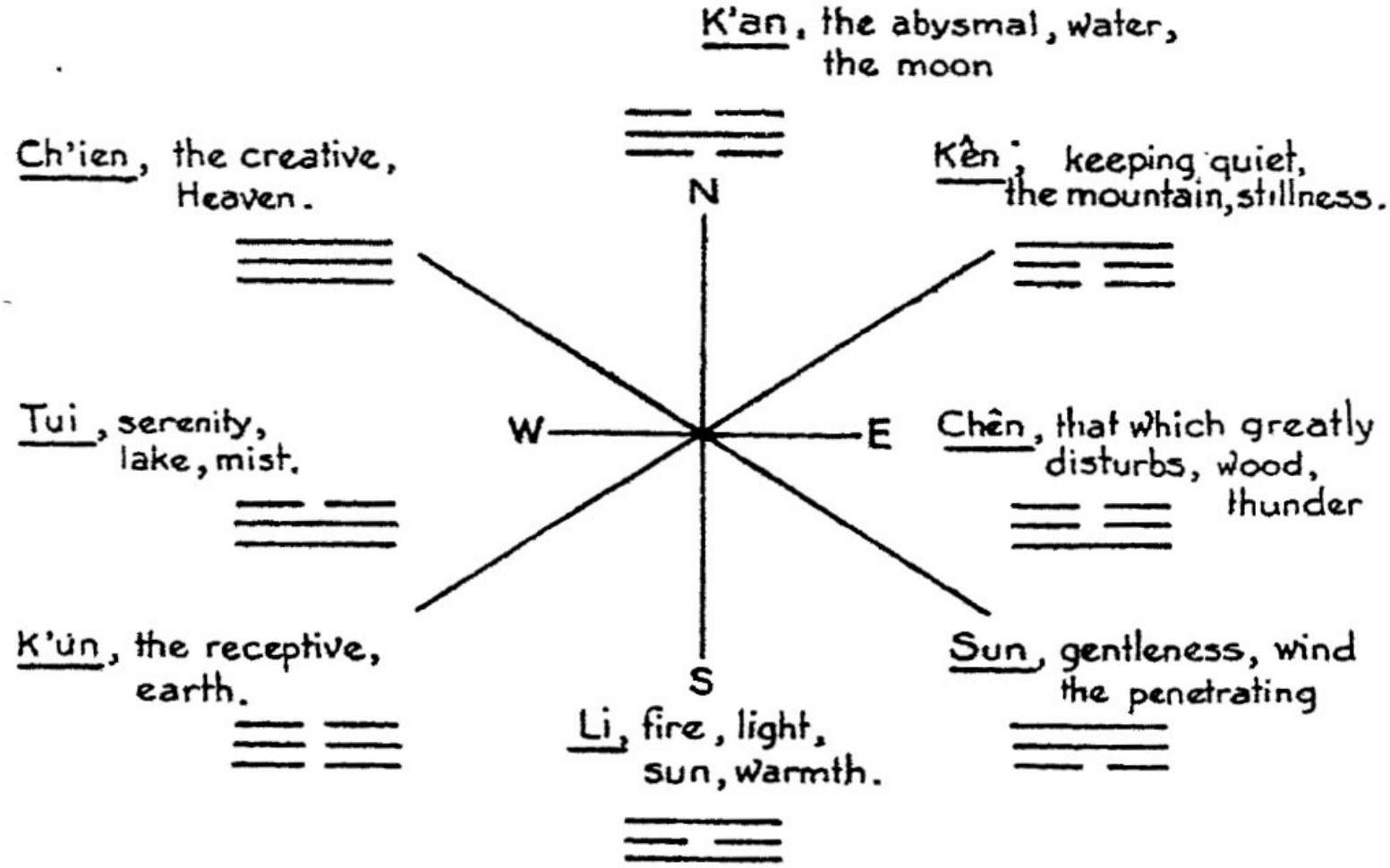
“All light begins within. Turn it back to its source — and what you find there is the eternal you.”

No screenshots required — unless you later choose to illustrate the light-circulation diagrams, stages of the Golden Flower, or the Reversal of Light pathway.



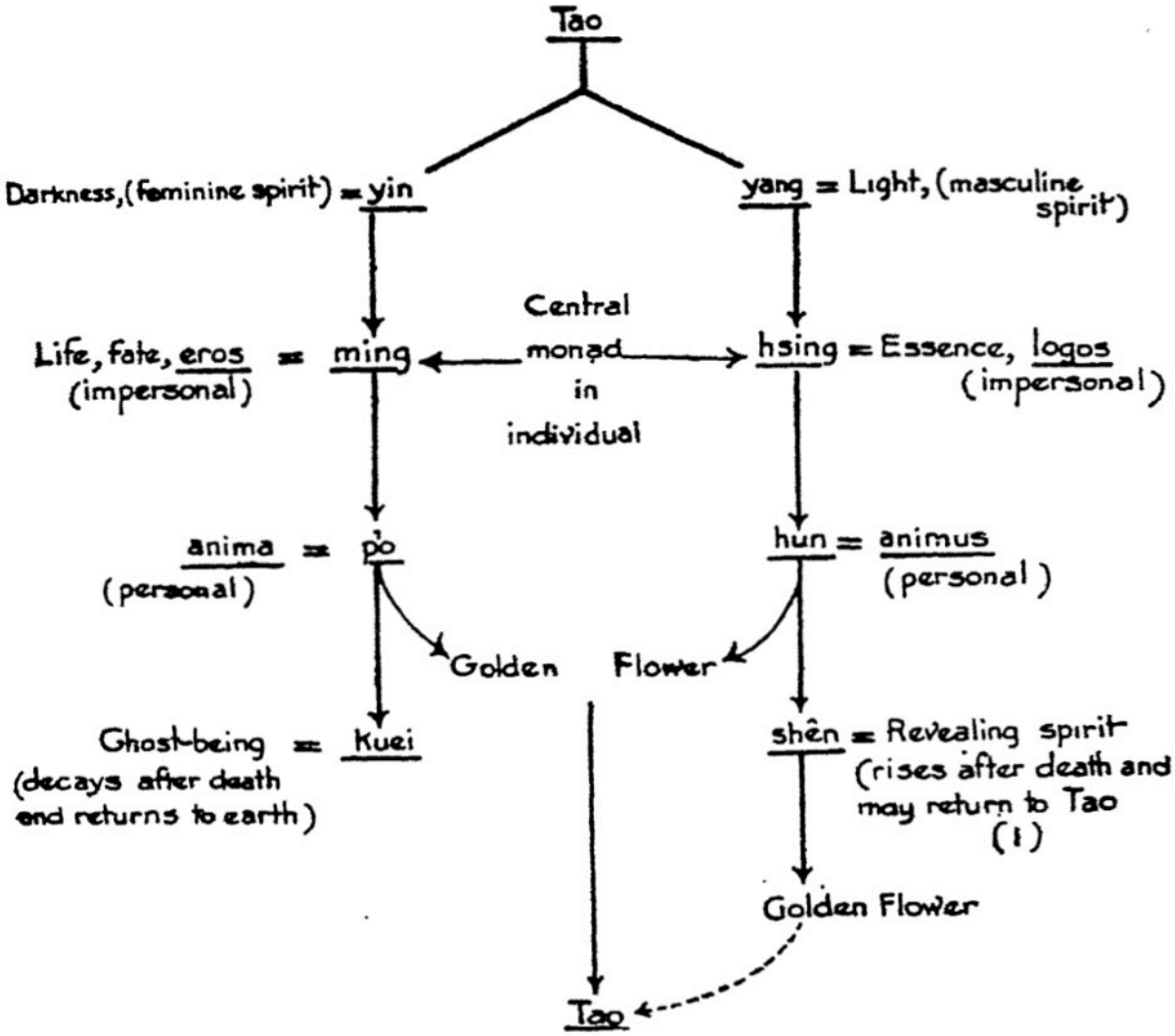
A LAMAIST VAJRY-MANDĀLA

To be studied in preparation for meditation



20. Compare Lao Tzŭ, *Tao Tê Ching*, section 6.

Diagram of the Chinese Concepts concerned with the development of the "Golden Flower", or Immortal "Spirit Body".



[1] As there is ample evidence in the text to show that Buddhist influences represented the Golden Flower as coming ultimately only from the spiritual side, that fact has been indicated by the dotted arrow leading down from *shén*. In undiluted Chinese teaching, however, the creation of the "Golden Flower" depends on the equal interplay of both the *yang* and *yin* forces.

Taoist Yoga: Alchemy and Immortality – Lu K'uan Yu (trans. from Chinese)
Stage IV: Dream Tech & Astral Training
(Also bridges into Stage V: Internal Alchemy, Chi & Lightbody)

🧩 Summary:
Taoist Yoga is a technical, dense guide to Chinese inner alchemy (Neidan) — detailing the transformation of sexual and vital energy into spiritual light, the building of an immortal lightbody, and the journey through inner energetic portals toward transcendence. It is one of the most exacting blueprints for energetic transmutation in any tradition.

🔥 Core Alchemical Stages:
1. Embryonic Breathing (Tai Xi)
First phase of inner alchemy: reverse breathing, subtle breath cultivation
Goal: regenerate the "immortal embryo" (lightbody core) in the lower dantian
2. Three Treasures (Jing, Qi, Shen)
Jing (essence) = sexual/spinal fluid energy
Qi (energy) = breath, circulation, movement
Shen (spirit) = awareness/light, seated in the heart
These are transmuted upward in a sealed circuit to refine the soul
3. Microcosmic Orbit (Xiao Zhou Tian)
Circulation of Qi along Ren (front) and Du (back) channels
Looping energy from perineum → crown → palate → heart
Mirrors Sufi breath spirals and Kabbalistic middle pillar work
4. Firing Process
Series of "heats" applied in ritual/meditative sequence to cook the internal cauldron
Like divine distillation — align Sun, Moon, breath, and intention to transmute Jing → Qi → Shen → Wu (emptiness)

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:

Alchemy Engine

➤ Inner transformation mapped onto software ritual protocols

Lightbody Codex

➤ Tracks stages of subtle energy development: embryo → fetus → spirit-form → immortal

Chi Circuit Interface

➤ Animate diagrams showing energy flow (du/ren channels, chakras, seals)

Breath Ritual Map

➤ Synced with Golden Flower, Tibetan Tummo, and Kundalini work for full-spectrum inner fire ignition

✨ Unique Contributions:

Taoist Yoga is a precise technical operating system for the human energetic body

Offers immortality through energetic refinement, not metaphor

Directly supports dream clarity, lucid vision, spiritual strength, and paranormal activation

🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:

“Through breath and fire, the mortal forges the immortal within. The lightbody is not imagined — it is built.”

No screenshots required — unless you later want to visualize the Microcosmic Orbit, alchemy phases, or inner cauldron diagrams.

2 THE MICROCOSMIC CAULDRON AND STOVE

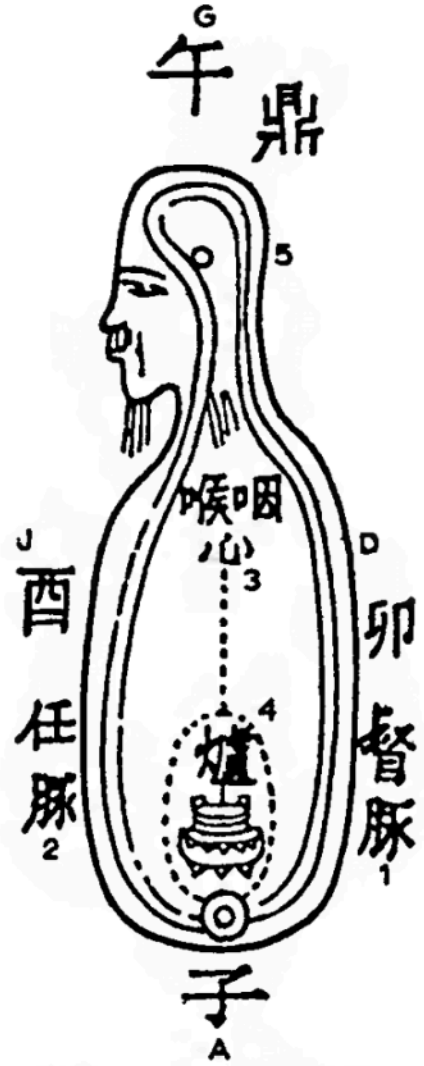


Figure 1 The four cardinal points: A bottom, G top, D back, J front 1 Channel of control (tu mo) 2 channel of function (jen mo) 3 heart 4 stove 5 precious cauldron (*See also* figure 8, *p. 124*)

The precious cauldron (yu ting) is a cavity in the centre of the brain (between and behind the eyes) and is the seat of (essential) nature, that is the original cavity of spirit (yuan shen shih or the ancestral cavity, tsu ch'iao); its left and right sides are linked with the pupils of the eyes by

two (psychic) channels; and it is also connected with the heart.[1] Hence it is said that essential nature is (in) the heart which manifests through the two eyes.

It is also said that essential nature is in the precious cauldron which originally did not exist. It is only when true vitality develops and unites with essential nature to become one whole that the latter is called the precious cauldron.

It is also said that about 1·3 inches under the navel is the cavity of real vitality (chen ch'i hsueh or lower tan t'ien) which lies between the front and back of the lower abdomen in proportion of seven to three and which is also called the golden stove (chin lu), the seat of (eternal) life.[2] Hence it is said that life is the generative force which develops in the genital organ. The golden stove originally did not exist but comes into being when the generative force develops and vitality manifests.

When the blood reaches the stove it changes into negative generative force which originates from this centre.

Saliva flows from two channels under the tongue. If it enters the jen mo channel (of function) it goes down into the lower tan t'ien centre (under the navel) to change into negative generative force, but a competent master should be sought to teach the proper way of swallowing saliva;[3] otherwise it will enter the stomach and intestines to be discharged as waste.

Question Will you please teach me the proper method of swallowing saliva?

Answer This is the quickest way to produce the generative force; it consists of touching the palate with the tongue to increase the flow of saliva more than usual. When the mouth is so full that you can hold no more and you are about

[1] We hope this explanation will put an end to the usual dispute between Eastern and Western scholars, the former insisting that heart, and the latter that brain, is the seat of mind.

[2] The stove in the lower tan t'ien becomes the golden stove when it starts to transmute the generative force into vitality.

[3] Cf. *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*, p. 206, first paragraph. Rider, London.

tise the checking method and you will be satisfied with the result.'

Question The Tan Ching says: 'At eighty and even ninety if one meets a competent master one can still produce the golden elixir (of immortality).' If a man at sixty-four is devoid of the positive principle which has turned negative due to the gradual dissipation of his generative force over the preceding decades and can still restore his vitality so that he

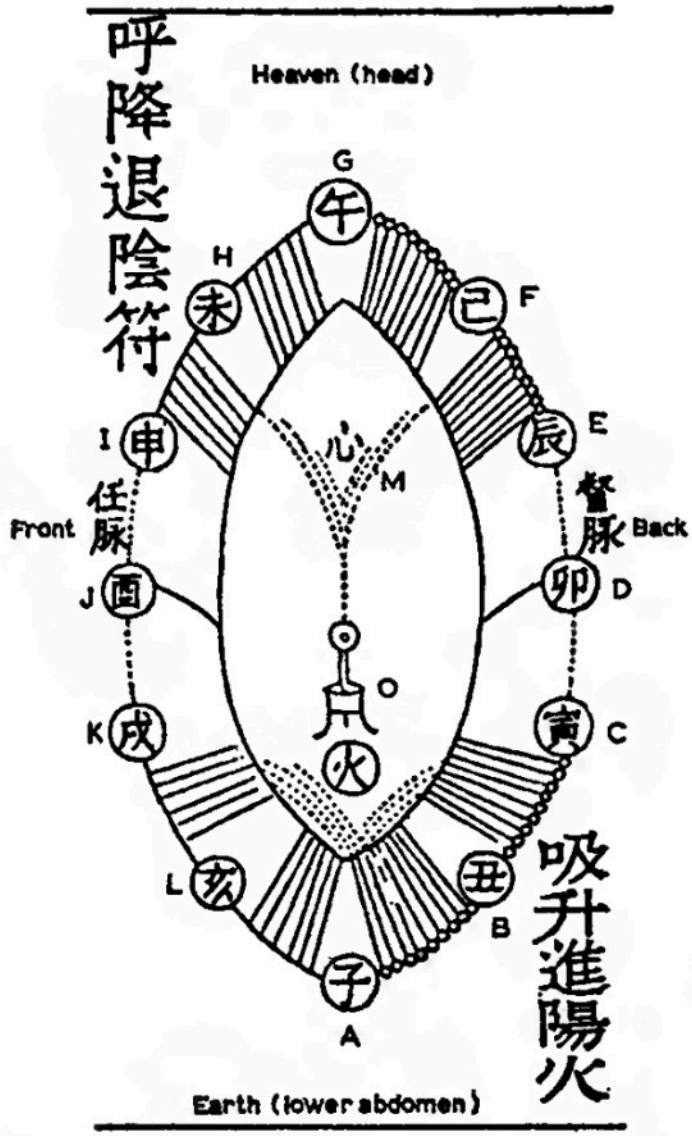


Figure 2 The microcosmic orbit and the channels of control and function A, G, D, J, are the four cardinal points of the microcosmic orbit A–B, A–C, A–E, A–F, are the four phases of ascent of positive fire in the channel of control G–H, G–I, G–K, G–A, are the four phases of descent of negative fire in the channel of function M Heart O Fire (in the stove)

looks like a youth at sixteen, there must be some secret method which can restore the generative force. Will you please teach me?

Answer The patriarch Chang San Feng said: 'Old people who are impotent may use artificial means (e.g. masturbation) to arouse the genital organ. After its arousal one should gather the generative force from the vitality in the body. A man lives because of this vitality which produces the generative force, and dies when it is exhausted.'

Now study carefully the diagram on page 13 which is very clear. As soon as the penis stands breathe in fresh air to fan the stove in the lower abdomen in order to drive the generative force into the channel of control (tu mo in the spine) and put it into microcosmic orbit.

Breathe in *nine times* to raise the generative force from position A to B.

If the penis continues to stand breathe in another *nine times* to raise the generative force from A to C. If the erection is not checked, then raise the generative force to D leaving it there for a little (for cleansing) before turning it back to the stove (in the lower abdomen).

Breathe in *nine times* again to raise the generative force from A to D leaving it there for a little before sending it up to E.

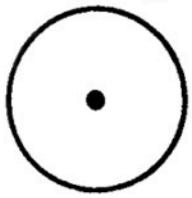
If the erection is still not checked breathe in a further *nine times* to raise the generative force from A to D leaving it there for a little before sending it up to F thence back to the stove.

You will thus complete four phases of nine breaths each or thirty-six in all, a positive number which controls the ascent of positive fire.

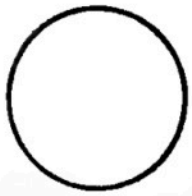
If in spite of these thirty-six breaths the genital organ is still aroused you should immediately gather the alchemical agent to collect vitality in order to restore the dissipated generative force.

To do this you should *breathe in* once more so that the generative force rises from A to D where it stops for a little

The inferior realm of desire: The generative force sublimated into vitality—the positive extracted from the negative.



The medium realm of form: Vitality sublimated into spirit—developing the positive to eliminate the negative gradually.



The superior realm beyond form: Full development of the positive to eradicate the negative completely —spirit returned to nothingness.

Figure 3 The three realms of desire, form and beyond form.

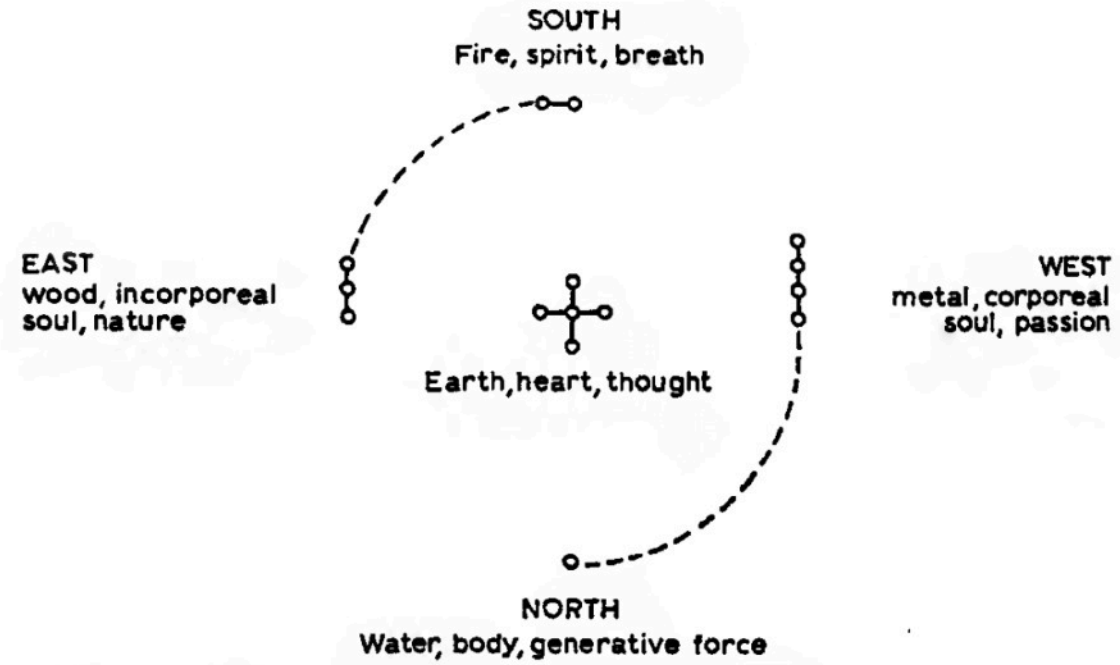
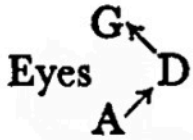
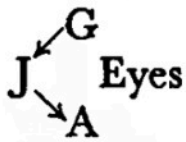


Figure 4 The perfect union (*See also* figure 8, *p. 124*)

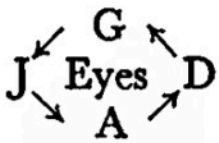
(so that the air goes down to exert pressure on the lower abdomen); and at the same time by rolling your eyes up you should follow the ascent of generative force and vitality from the bottom to the top of the head, thus:



When you breathe out, you should open (p'i) the respiratory mechanism so that the air goes out of the body (to relax pressure on the lower abdomen); at the same time your eyes should follow the descent of generative force and vitality from the top to the bottom, thus:



So to complete an orbit you should roll your eyes right round thus:



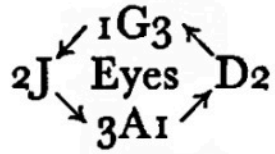
All this is generally called the ascent of positive and descent of negative fire; while inhalation, shutting, ascent and opening, exhalation, descent are the phases of the alchemical process.

As for the bellows (t'o yo, see page 38), it is used to make these ascents and descents. Prenatal vitality is produced and stored up by this (breathing) process while (fire in) the heart and (water in the) lower abdomen mingle. If the generative and vital forces do not vibrate (in the lower abdomen) there is no need to employ the inner bellows. For ventilation (by in and out breathing), the ascent of positive and descent of negative fire, the cauldron and stove, are so-called and come into play only after the generative and vital forces have vibrated.

The six phases of each microcosmic orbiting have their

psychic channels. It causes (essential) nature which is above to unite with life which is below.

During this process of sublimation you should roll your (closed) eyes to look successively at the four cardinal points A, D, G, J (and A) thus:



This is called inner and outer ho p'i (i.e. inner vital force and outer air) which operate like a bellows. Although the mechanism is the same the air in the body works differently from that in the bellows. While the inner breeze starts the eyes roll to look at the four cardinal points A, D, G and J, and while nature and life in the body change place during the shutting and opening process, the latter sets in motion the generative force which is automatically transmuted into vitality (which circulates up and down). Even the practiser himself does not know why the head, eyes, limbs and breathing function like this, for each inhalation followed by the shutting, and each exhalation preceded by the opening, takes place spontaneously.

The natural six phases of orbiting are: ascent from A, cleansing at D, stay at G, descent from G, purification at J and return to A; they are caused by an inhalation which initiates the ascent and an exhalation the descent.

Thus the rise from A to D and G involves the first, second and third stages of an ascent, and the fall from G to J and A comprises the first, second and third stages of a descent. Hence the Tan Ching says: 'Execute three phases up the back and another three down the front of the body, pick up and return (the vital force) to the lower tan t'ien cavity (under the navel).'

The six phases in the ascent of positive fire from A to B, C, D, E and F are positive; the positive number being nine, the total number of all six positive phases is: 9×4 (for the four changing seasons) $\times 6$ (phases) $= 216$.

The six phases in the descent of its negative counterpart

from G to H, I, J, K and L are negative: the negative number being six, the total number of all six negative phases is: $6 \times 4 \times 6 = 144$.

Since the two cardinal points D and J are reserved for cleansing and purification and are, therefore, not taken into consideration, actually the total positive number is 180 and the total negative number is 120. So both ascent and descent involve 300 breaths which are symbolic only (and not actual counts).

My master Liao K'ung said: 'Practise this every morning and evening in order to avoid all risks (wei hsien) at night (e.g. involuntary emission).'

Question Every day I turn the water-wheels (ho che) (i.e. the microcosmic orbits) but still cannot stop involuntary emission; what is the reason?

Answer According to your statement this is purposeless turning of empty water-wheels which is unprofitable. You asked before about the gentle breeze, using the bellows, shutting and opening, the six phases of ascent and descent, cleansing and purification; these stages are involved in each in and out breath. The method should begin when the penis erects at night and consists of blocking the genital gate with pointed concentration in order to drive spirit into the cavity of vitality (under the navel). This is like a blacksmith using his bellows; the air from it blows the inner fire which, becoming intense, transmutes the generative force into vitality. The latter is then gathered and sent up and down in the microcosmic orbit.

At present you just sit motionless, close your eyes and then make the ascents and descents 360 times; this is purposeless turning of empty water-wheels and is not the proper method of preparing the golden elixir. It is because when you began to meditate your mind was disturbed by thoughts that you were taught to make 360 turns to achieve mental stillness only. Your body is now so weak that if you fail to restore the generative force you will not be able to improve your health.

6 GATHERING THE MICROCOSMIC INNER ALCHEMICAL AGENT[1]

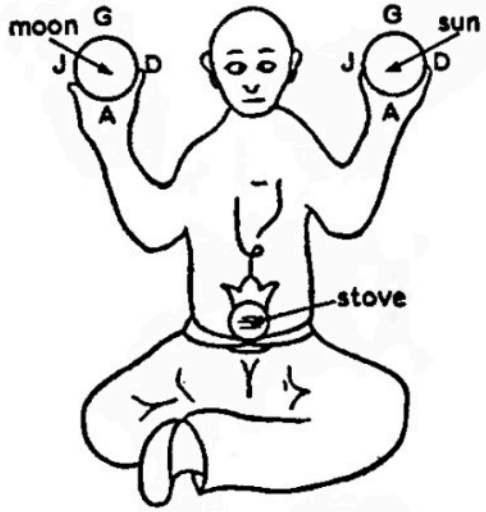


Figure 5 This symbolic diagram is copied from the original text. It means that the meditator should squint as indicated while his hands are placed on the legs and close to the lower abdomen in the usual meditation posture.

The method of gathering the microcosmic inner alchemical agent consists of rolling the eyes from left to right and vice versa to raise and lower the inner fire. The meditator should first direct his eyes down and roll them from the left up to the top of the head, thence lowering them to the right to look into the navel and the centre of vitality below it to complete a full turn as indicated in the diagram by the sun held in his left hand which rises from A to D and G and then sinks from G to J. This movement should be repeated thirty-six times for the ascent of *positive fire* to open the mysterious gate (see page 63). After this he should roll his eyes from G to D, A and J as indicated by the moon held in his right hand. This movement should be repeated twenty-four times for the descent of *negative fire*.

Chapter 4 has dealt with gathering the (microcosmic) outer alchemical agent to restore the generative force and

[1] See note 2 on page xv (Preface).

Figure 6 The dragon (negative vitality) and the tiger (positive vitality) 'copulating' in the alchemical cauldron in the brain to realise the oneness of heaven and earth.

Question What is the macrocosmic alchemical agent and how can one transmute it into golden nectar and return the latter to the cauldron (in the lower abdomen)?

Answer The macrocosmic alchemical agent is the union of both outer and inner microcosmic agents which emits the light of Reality. The nectar (or sweet dew, kan lu) is produced long after the intermingling of the four symbols (prenatal heaven and earth and postnatal heart and abdomen) and the union of the sun with the moon (the positive yang and negative yin). He who knows how to gather it will obtain the golden nectar but he who does not gets only the white one (pure saliva). If it is young the light is blurred and unstable in the chung kung cavity (solar plexus). This (circle of) light manifests in the condition of utter stillness but if it grows from a small to a large one and then vanishes, or if it shrinks from a large to a small one, splits into three, or looks like a crescent, all this shows that the generative force and vitality are not full. But if the light suddenly goes up and down so quickly that the eyes cannot follow it, it is imperative to gather vitality immediately and return the circle of light to the body. Then after his heart and intellect have settled the practiser should roll his eyes from A to D, G, J and back to A, as follows:[2]

After rolling his eyes, he should close them and as his mouth is now full of golden nectar, he should make pointed concentration on the vitality which he has just circulated (as above), driving it down (the jen mo or channel of function), followed by the golden nectar, into the cavity of vitality (below the navel). This is returning vitality to the cauldron to seal it there.

After the golden nectar has been swallowed with a gulp that echoes loudly in the belly, the practiser should draw

[2] These four cardinal points are in the same order as in the microcosmic orbit.

9 THE IMMORTAL BREATHING OR THE SELF-WINDING WHEEL OF THE LAW

Figure 7 The heel and trunk channels. 1 the heel channel (tung chung) from the heels to the brain. 2 the trunk channel (tung ti) from the lower abdomen to the brain.

(The shutting (ho) and opening (p'i) process of immortal breathing causes postnatal vital breath to rise from the heels up to the channel of control through which it soars to the brain, thence going down in the channel of function to the trunk (i.e. the mortal gate). These

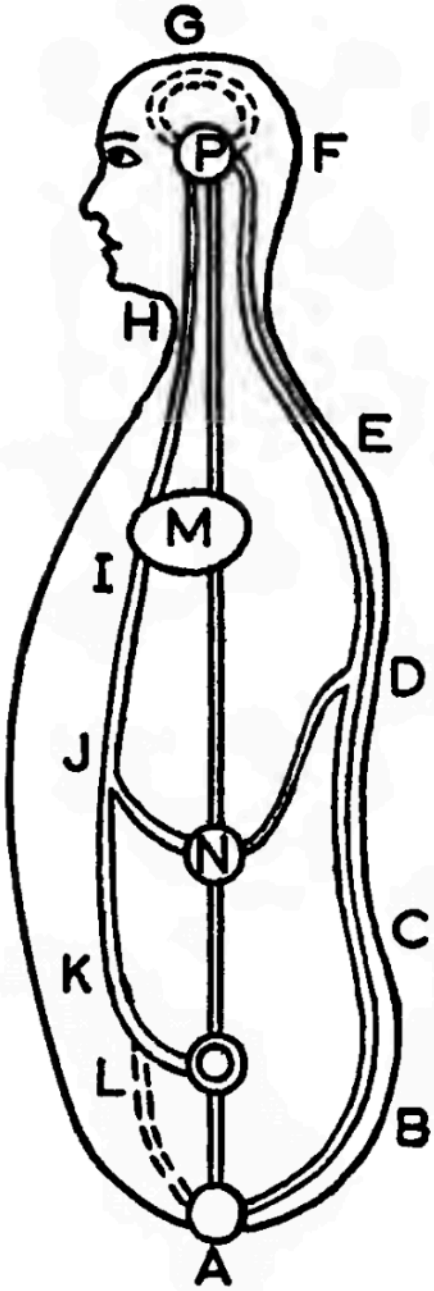
continual ascents and descents will in time vibrate prenatal true vitality in the lower tan t'ien which will first ascend in the channel of control to the brain to push postnatal vital breath there down in the channel of function to the trunk, and will then descend in the channel of function to the base of the penis to drive postnatal vital breath up in the channel of control to the brain).

In the last chapter we explained the method of freezing spirit which is so called because it consists of first gathering prenatal true vitality in the original cavity of spirit (tsu ch'iao in the centre of the brain) and then driving it into the lower tan t'ien (under the navel). When doing it the eyes should turn inward to look into the latter centre until the heart and intellect are disengaged from the duality of the self and others and unite in the state of indistinctness until exhalation becomes subtle while inhalation continues unbroken, harmonic and restful. In time the lower tan t'ien centre (under the navel) vibrates extending its field of activity from the heart to the lower belly. After a long time this vibration will stop and be replaced by stillness, with the result that all inner (vital) breaths stop leaving the body whereas all outer ones continue to enter it; this reveals the restoration of foetal breath (see below) and the return (of prenatal vitality) to its source which is 'a cavity within a cavity'; thus the state of profound serenity is attained.

This profound foetal breathing, now fully restored, neither gathers nor scatters and is disconnected from (the duality of) the self and others; its serenity is lasting, being neither within nor without, neither stillness nor disturbance, and free from vibration; thus it unites the sun with the moon, and joins up the positive and negative principles. It puts an end to the state of confusion and causes the practiser to enter the (immortal) foetus to clear away all postnatal conditions.

This foetal breathing depends neither on breathing through the nostrils or mouth nor on retaining the breath in the lower tan t'ien. Outsiders and heretics use the nostrils

(essential) nature (hsin hai); this is the (tsu ch'iao) cavity in the centre of the brain which is linked with the two eyes and also with the heart (see pages 9–10). If in spite of this connection the precious light does not manifest at the early



The channel of control (tu mo)
A B C D E F:
A (tzu *cardinal point North*—the mortal gate (sheng szu ch'iao)
B (ch'uo) intermediate point
C (yin) intermediate point
D (mao) *cardinal point East*, wood (cleansing)
E (ch'en) intermediate point
F (szu) intermediate point
The channel of function (jen mo)
G H I J K L :
G (wu) *cardinal point South*—the brain (ni wan)
H (wei) intermediate point
I (shen) intermediate point
J (yu) *cardinal point West*, metal (purifying)
K (shu) intermediate point
L (hai) intermediate point
The thrusting channel (ch'ung mo)
M N O A:
M (li) the heart—house of fire
N (chung t'u) the central earth, the solar plexus (chiang kung)
O (k'an) the lower tan t'ien—house of water
P The centre of the brain (tsu ch'iao)

Figure 8 The channels of control, function and thrusting.

stage of practice, it is because the centre of (essential) nature (i.e. the tsu ch'iao) is still closed.

In order to open this centre of (essential) nature the practiser should place an oil lamp in front of him and concen-

female organs of a flower, the union of which will bear fruit.

The following diagram shows the field of concentration for gathering the macrocosmic alchemical agent with the manifestation of positive light.

The method consists of constantly nurturing and preserving the two lights of nature and life by keeping them warm in the body. When they are fully developed, they will unite automatically and will *never* scatter to form shapeless external light. At this stage the practiser feels as if his nasal

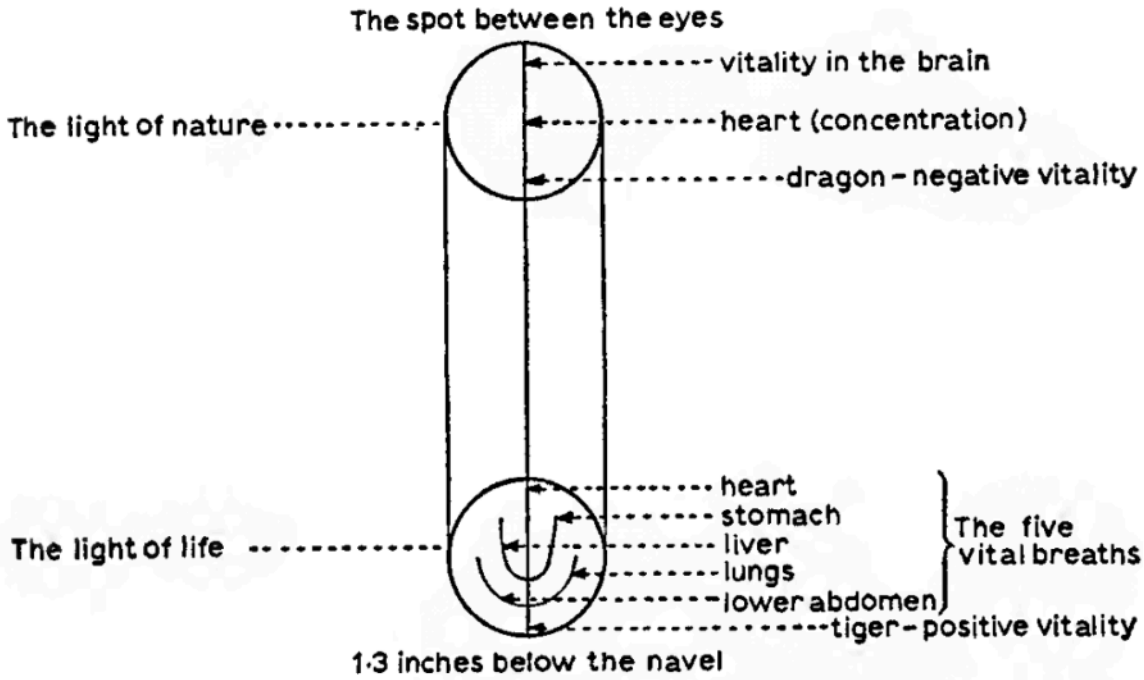


Figure 9 The field of concentration for gathering the macrocosmic alchemical agent.

breathing has ceased and his pulses have stopped beating, which reveals the fullness of (eternal) life after all twigs have returned to the root.

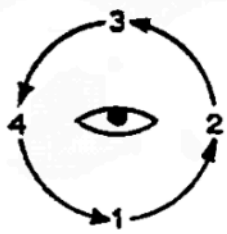
The reason for concentrating in the head the vital breaths (in the heart, stomach, liver, lungs and lower abdomen) is to gather the macrocosmic alchemical agent for the final breakthrough.

The Hui Ming Ching Chi Shuo says: 'When the light, whether white or golden, manifests to reveal (essential) nature, the practiser should call on a competent master

occiput. If the latter is blocked and the gem remains stationary there, his companion should *pinch* the back of the head to ease its ascent. For it cannot be moved by the practiser's thought and concentration but by itself because of the companion's *pinch* which warms and loosens the marrow in the third gate. The practiser by *pressing* a finger on the mortal gate, causes the gem to thrust into the occiput, but he should wait until it enters it before guiding it into the correct channel. When it suddenly thrusts of itself through the back of the head, the practiser should immediately look up to support its ascent. This is what we call the '*five dragons upholding the holy one*' in its ascent.

The practiser should now force his eyes up acting like *an ox drawing a cart uphill.* He should support this ascent by *pressing* the tongue on the palate and *sucking* in a breath through the nose. Finally if he stretches the small of his back with a crack, the gem will of itself thrust into the occiput.

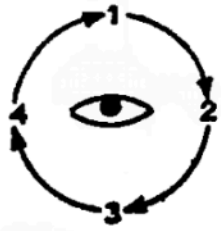
Now his companion should quickly *pinch* the nape of his neck to warm and loosen the marrow there so that the gem can slowly enter the 'store house of the wind' (feng fu, a cavity in the back of the head), the medulla oblongata, the cerebellum and the vital cavity of nature-spirit in the centre of the cerebrum. When life-vitality meets nature-spirit they unite and stay in the same cavity; the practiser should use a clothes-peg to shut his nostrils, quickly close his eyes and roll them from left to right nine times, and then pause to gaze at the light of vitality that appears in that cavity. This exercise of rolling the eyes is to be done four times, making 9×4 or thirty-six turns, during which his eye should be rolled thus:



to lift up the positive yang.

After this, he should open his eyes and roll them from right to left, and then close them to gaze at the light of vitality.

This should be done four times, making 6×4 or twenty-four turns, during which the eyes should be rolled thus:



to lower the negative yin.

This rolling of the eyes will cause spirit and vitality to unite into one single gem which is called the prenatal true seed (hsien t'ien chen chung).

When he turns his eyes down, this true seed in the original cavity of spirit (tsu ch'iao between and behind the eyes) will descend from the forehead to seek an outlet through the nose, which is open, and if the latter is not shut by a clothes-peg, it will drain away by the nostrils, and all previous progress will be nullified. This is the danger of a fall from the upper magpie-bridge (shang ch'ueh ch'iao, the nasal duct).

Therefore, the practiser should provide himself with a wooden bun and a clothes-peg for use at this stage. If the true seed does not drain away by the nose and is stationary between the eyebrows, the practiser should remain thoughtless and motionless with his spirit frozen and look down while waiting for the true seed to move of itself. Suddenly it will thrust and the practiser should follow and guide it into the hsuan ying cavity (the mysterious bridle behind the heavenly pool above the mouth) and the throat where another peril should be anticipated. If he has not received instruction from a competent master he will spurt the true seed (out of his mouth) but if he has been instructed he will swallow it, and after passing down the throat it will reach the heart and the liver at the base of which is the chiang kung cavity (the solar plexus) where it mingles with the negative breath in the liver. With his eyes fixed on it, the true seed will reach the intestines in the middle of which is the channel of function (jen mo) and then slip into the lower tan t'ien cavity (under the navel) where it will remain stationary.

道胎圖

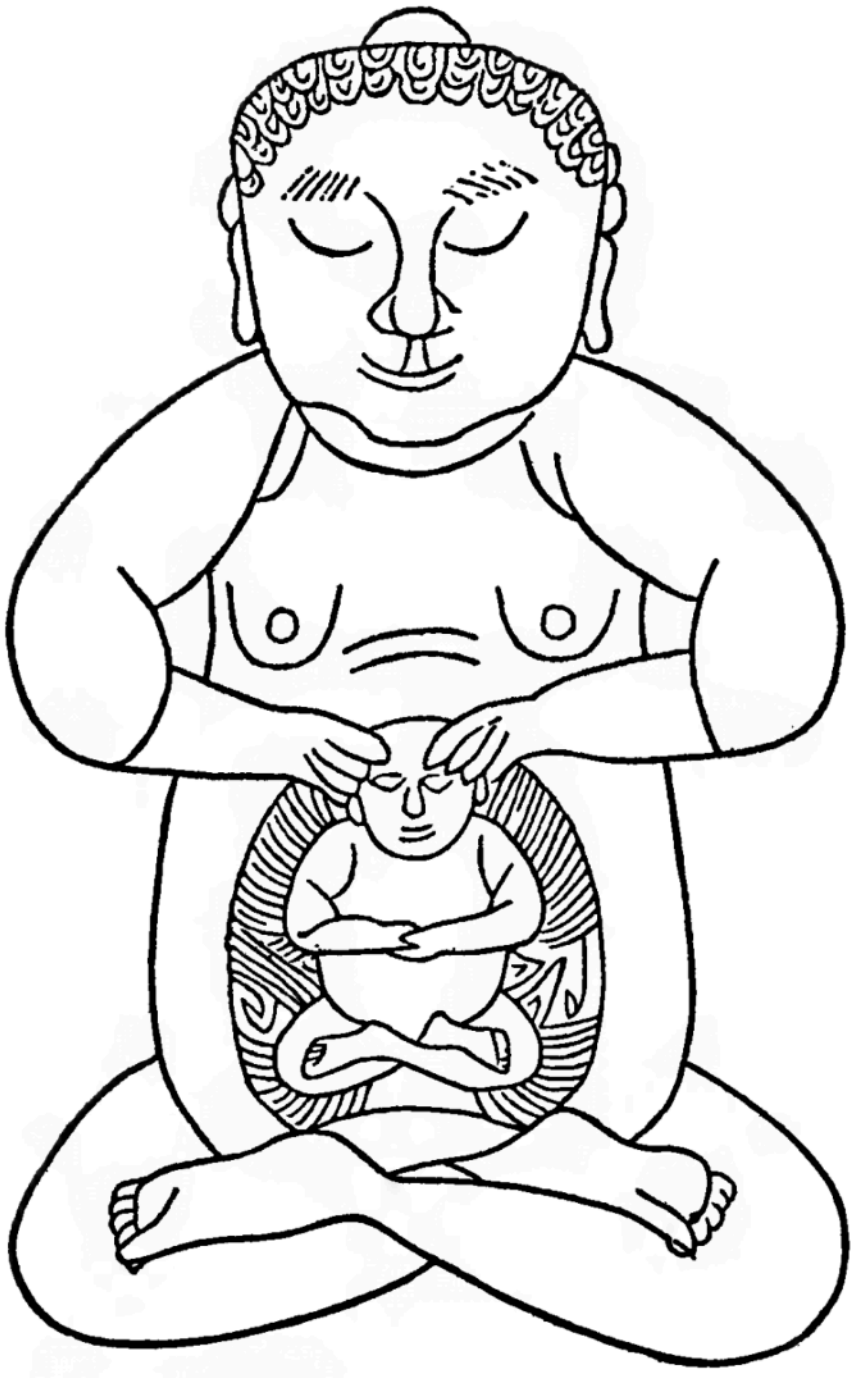


Figure 10 The immortal foetus

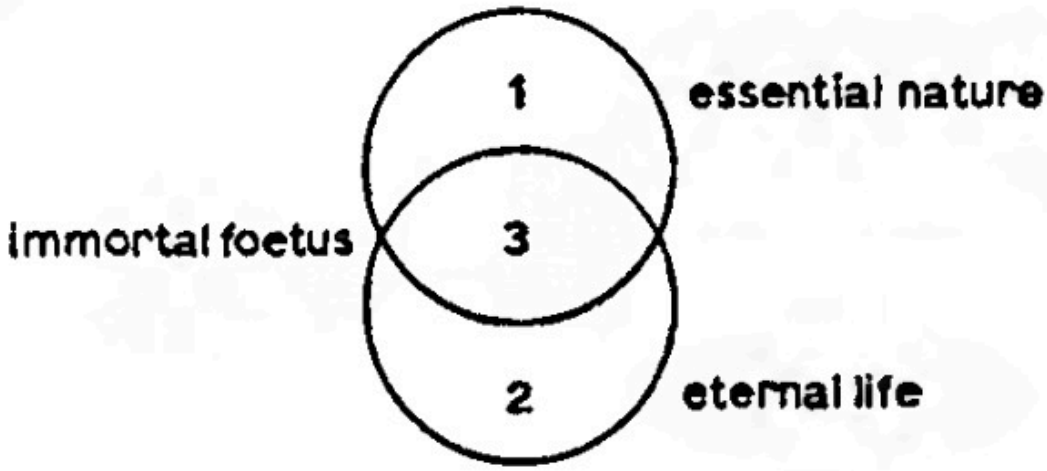
(under the navel) to cause the foetal breath to ascend slowly, little by little, to the middle tan t'ien (or the solar plexus). This means that the spirit which has been in (the cavity of) vitality (i.e. the lower tan t'ien) for some time now moves to ascend to the middle tan t'ien where vitality will envelop the foetal spirit which will be dull, confused and indistinct, like a foetus in the mother's womb. This is the stage of breathlessness. When spirit is enveloped by vitality in the middle tan t'ien, it is called the immortal foetus (tao t'ai). That this foetus is forming is revealed by foetal vitality manifesting before the practiser's eyes as the light of vitality.

It is very difficult for the practiser to refrain from using this manifestating vitality (which is tempting). He has to bury the heart (the seat of the fire of passion) in order to resurrect (essential) nature; he should not allow himself to be held back by house work, or entangled in worldly activities so that all mundane things can be kept away for ever. Then he will know only this light of vitality beyond which there is nothing to concern him; this is complete relinquishment of all earthly attachments. If there still remains a trace of negative breath in the body, demonic states will develop; the practiser should then employ the method for banishing demons (see opposite).

The above are the four stages of serenity, the sequence of which is: (a) thoughtlessness (nien chu), (b) breathlessness (hsi chu), (c) pulselessness (mo chu) and (d) extinction (unmindfulness) of worldly existence (mieh chin).

Question You have said that when the foetal breath ascends to the middle tan t'ien (in the solar plexus), it will be enveloped by the prenatal vitality there and will become the immortal foetus; and that foetal vitality manifests before the practiser's eyes, as the light of vitality. How then can worldly things and demonic visions manifest in that light of vitality?

Answer When the immortal foetus is nurtured in the middle tan t'ien, the heart is like a lotus leaf which cannot be


1
essential nature
immortal foetus
3
2
eternal life

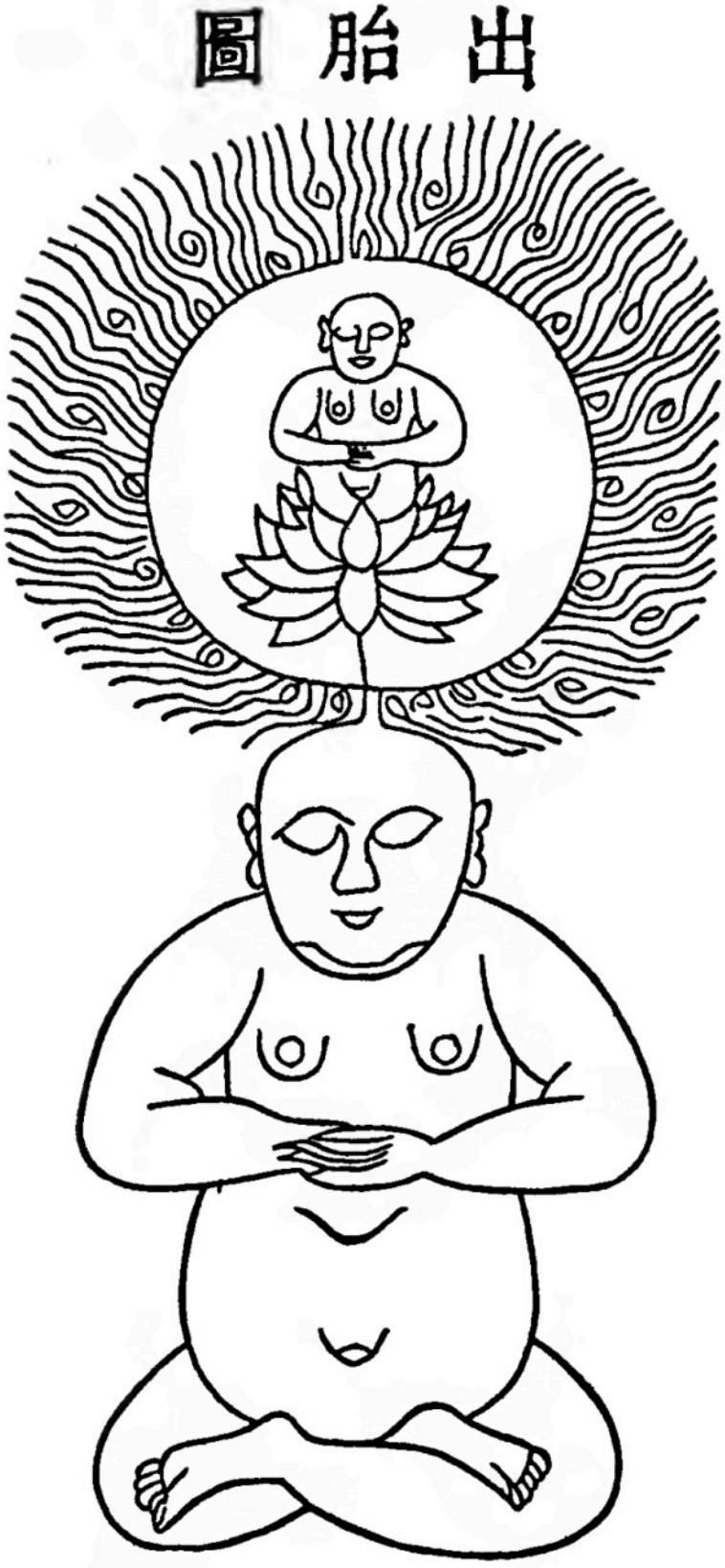


Figure 11 The egress

unflinching faith; and during the ten months of its formation his mind should be set uniquely on it. (At this stage) neither the mouth nor the heart (i.e. neither words nor thoughts) are directed to the foetus whose serenity results from stopping the thinking process, and regulating the breath which brings about its full development and maturity.

When the practiser sees flying snow and falling flowers, he should, in order to leave the immortal foetus, hasten to give rise to the thought of leaping into the great emptiness, which will open the heavenly gate (miao men) of the sun and the moon (i.e. the two eyes) which he, now free from feelings and passions, and in accord with (essential) nature, should roll so that the two lights meet. This is the method of coming out of the foetus which the ancients did not lightly disclose for it should not be revealed to those who have not received instruction from competent masters.

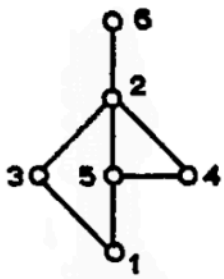
Question Will you please explain in detail the method of realising this egress?

Answer This method was only verbally transmitted from masters to disciples and was not lightly revealed in books, but I was ordered to make it available to all serious practisers of alchemy. So I deal with it here.

In reality there was a method of coming out of the immortal foetus to appear in (countless) transformation bodies, but it is not easy to obtain it now. Formerly there was an adept called Lan Yang Su who had fully developed his immortal foetus and had seen flowers falling in disorder from the sky, but since he had not received instruction from competent masters, he failed to achieve the egress; so he was as ignorant as any worldly man in spite of (the possibility of attaining) eternal life lasting as long as heaven and earth. Later the patriarch Liu Hai Shan sent him the following poem:

Though realisation comes from manifesting the divine
Never let its (great) attractiveness handicap your body.
Just follow the immortal Wu's method of liberation
And when the foetus is mature you'll leap over the mundane.

the head; when (essential) nature is serene the incorporeal soul will be hidden and the element of wood moves to the head; when passions cease, the corporeal soul is subdued and the element of metal moves to the head; when these four elements (water, fire, wood and metal) are in harmony, the intellect is stable and the element of earth moves to the head. Thus all five (vital) breaths converge in the head as follows:



1 element of water (north)
2 element of fire (south)
3 element of wood (east)
4 element of metal (west)
5 element of earth (centre) (intellect)
6 the head

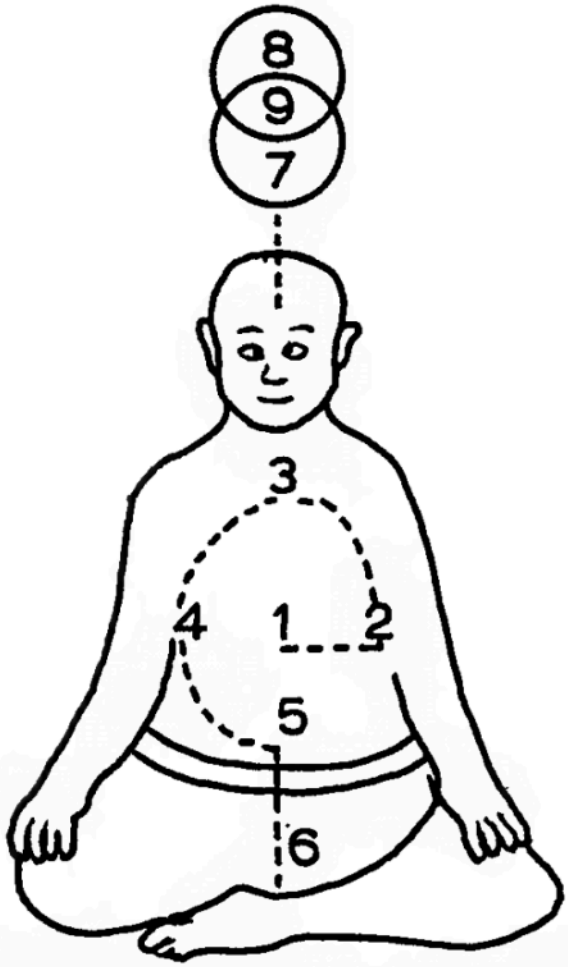
Figure 12 The five elements

When the five (vital) breaths converge in the head, the golden light appears and unites with the light of vitality which has manifested after the intermingling of the three essential compounds (i.e. the generative force, vitality and spirit). This is the union of the true positive and negative principles from which the immortal foetus emerges to take shape.

No foetus can be produced in a sterile male body, for to do so there must be a creative cause that drives (vital) breath into the cavity of vitality (the lower tan t'ien centre under the navel) to form a (spiritual) foetus there. After its formation, the practiser should gather the five (vital) breaths and drive them up to the head in order to force open the original cavity of spirit (tsu ch'iao between and behind the eyes). When the heavenly gate (miao men at the top of the head) opens, the two lights which have gathered in the original cavity of spirit will emerge to develop into a mass of golden light the size of a large wheel within which positive spirit (i.e. the immortal man) sits upright while the red light of his negative breath changes into a demon who

the head, the spirit will not leave. Below is a diagram showing the five vitalities converging to the head before the egress of positive spirit.

The five vitalities unite into a single one which will rise from the base of the spine to the head to break through the original cavity of spirit before reaching the top of the



1 Vitality in the heart
2 Vitality in the spleen
3 Vitality in the lungs
4 Vitality in the liver
5 Vitality in the kidneys
6 Descent to the base of the spine before rising in the backbone to the head
7 The negative principle
8 The positive principle
9 Egress from the foetus

Figure 13 The five vitalities converging to the head.

head where the golden light of the true negative principle meets the moonlight of the true positive principle in order to beget the immortal foetus in the centre (where both lights meet). The practiser should now lower his eyes to look down so that his spiritual body will manifest with his physical body at its side. His spiritual body is similar in features to his physical body but traces of negative vitality in the former will cause demonic hindrance by all sorts of

Figure 14 Countless transformation bodies appearing in space

The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep – Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
Stage IV: Dream Tech & Astral Training

🧩 Summary:
This is the core manual of dreamwork in the Bon and Tibetan Buddhist traditions, guiding the practitioner through lucid dreaming, dream transformation, sleep awareness, and preparation for death. While Namkhai Norbu focuses on awareness, Tenzin Wangyal goes deeper into structured practices, visualizations, and Bardo technology.

🌌 Core Teachings:
1. Dream Yoga (Milam)
Step-by-step lucid dream training:
Perform reality checks during the day
Visualize syllables (like A or HUM) at chakras while falling asleep
Recognize dream signs → become lucid
Once lucid: fly, visit sacred places, transform objects, call deities, or dissolve dream itself
2. Sleep Yoga
Practice awareness during deep, dreamless sleep
Enter the state of clear light — a non-dual awareness beyond form
Similar to Golden Flower's "reversal to the root" practice
3. Bardo Yoga
Use dreamwork to prepare for death
Teaches that dreams are mini-deaths
You can rehearse liberation in the dream state to prepare for the Chikhai Bardo (death moment)
4. Spiritual Physiology
Chakra visualizations (throat, heart, forehead)
Tummo heat and light practices for clarity and power
Integrates subtle body with awareness training

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:

Dream Grid Navigation System

➤ Use chakra-glyph combinations to stabilize lucidity and astral projection

Bardo Sim Emulator

➤ Create visual overlays of dream > death > rebirth as conscious portals

Lucid Light Ritual Framework

➤ Light syllables (Tibetan or Hebrew) + angelic sigils to enter dream space

Simultaneous Sleep/Wake Mode

➤ Merge dream, wake, and meditative states into a lucid “triphasic beingness”

✨ Unique Contributions:

Provides the full inner operating system of dream and death practice

Teaches both conscious dreaming and conscious dying

Gives visualization technologies that can be re-coded into your DreamOS

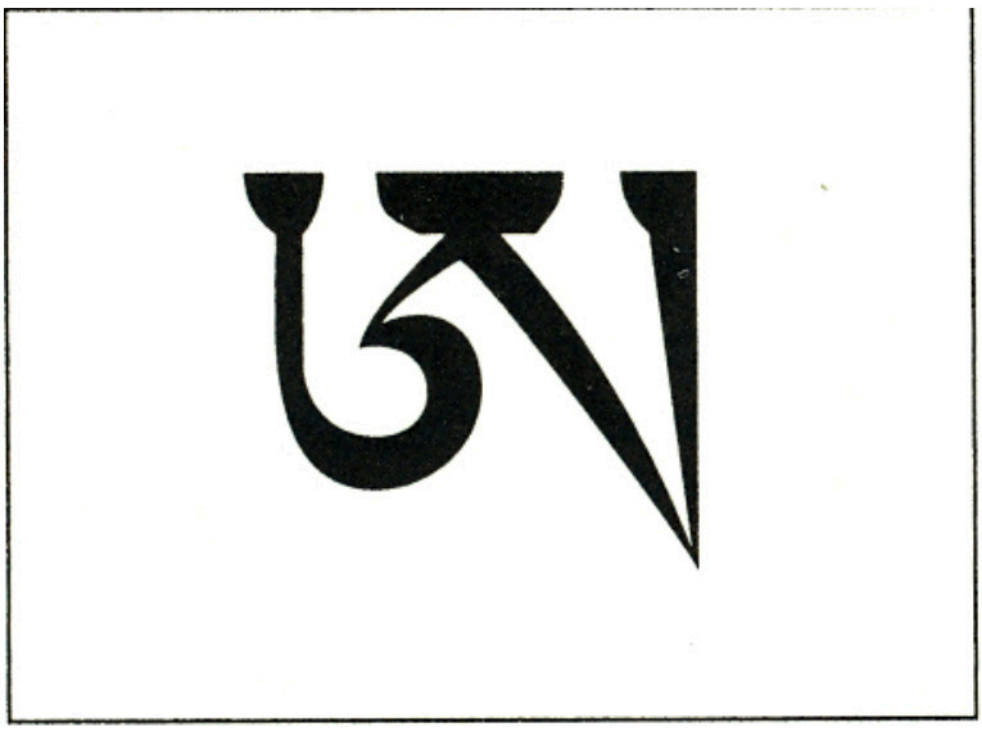
🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:

“Mastering the dream is not about fantasy. It’s about awakening — to use the dream to wake up in life, death, and eternity.”

No screenshots required — but visual overlays of chakra syllables, Bardo timeline maps, or sleep ritual stages can be created later if desired.

Realm	Primary Emotion	Chakra
God (Devas)	Pleasurable distraction	Crown
Demi-god (Asuras)	Envy	Throat
Human	Jealousy	Heart
Animal	Ignorance	Navel
Hungry-ghost (Pre-tas)	Greed	Sexual Organs
Hell	Hatred	Soles of the feet

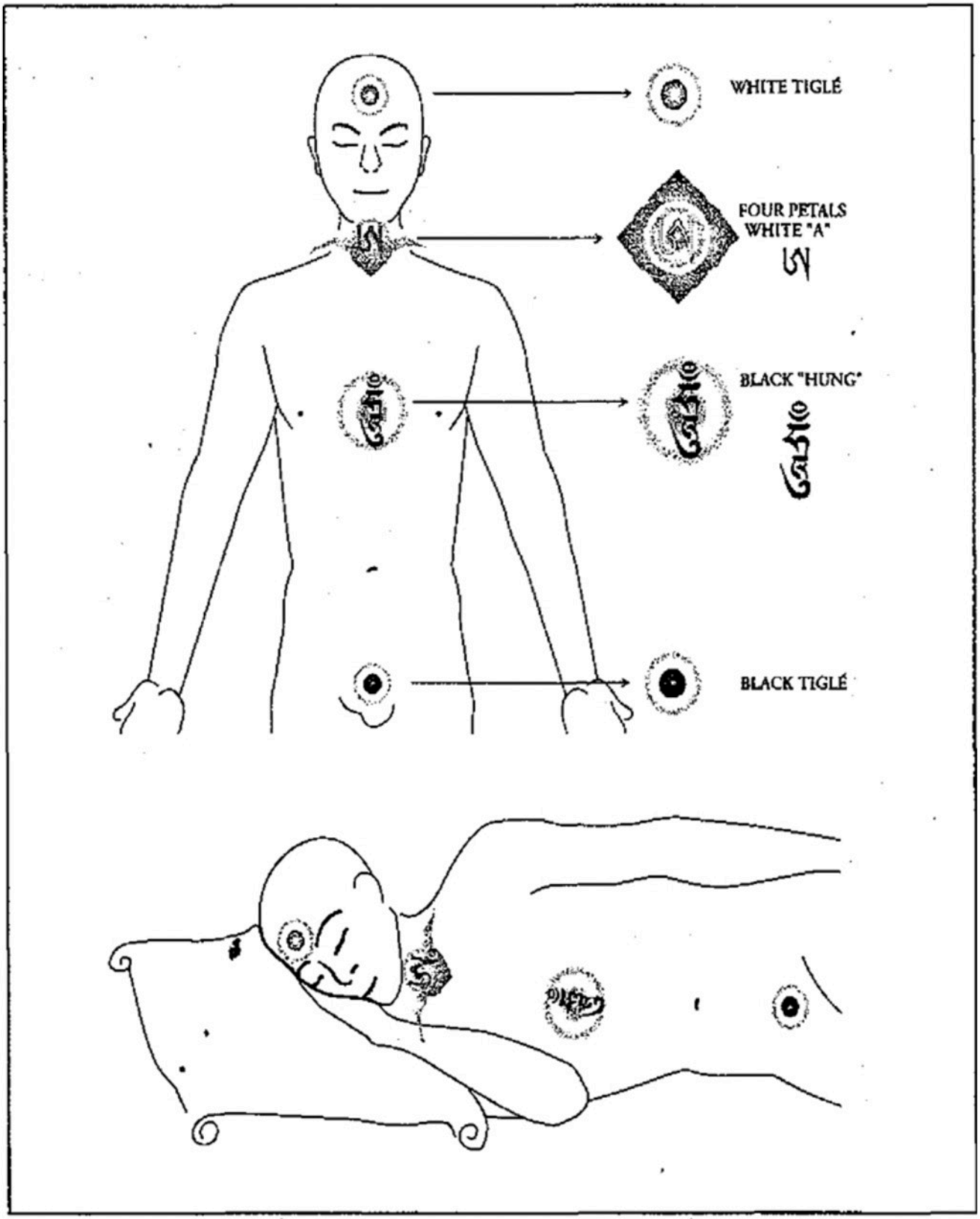
Meditation Posture

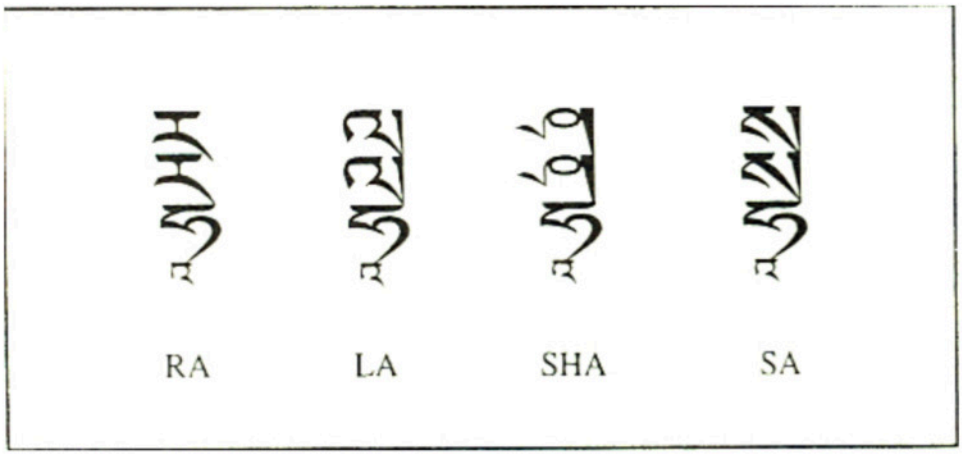


The Tibetan A

If you wish to use the Tibetan *A* you can write it on a piece of paper about an inch square. Traditionally, the letter is white and is enclosed in five concentric colored circles: the center circle that is the direct background for the *A* is indigo; around it is a blue circle, then green, red, yellow, and white ones. Tape the paper to a stick that is just long enough to support the paper at eye level when you sit for practice, and make a base that holds it upright. Place it so that the *A* is about a foot and a half in front of your eyes.

Many signs of progress can arise during the practice. As concentration strengthens and the periods of practice are extended, strange sensations arise in the body and many strange visual phenomena appear. You may find your mind doing strange things, too! That is all right. These experiences are a natural part of the development of concentration; they arise as the


WHITE TIGLÉ
FOUR PETALS
WHITE "A"
BLACK "HUNG"
BLACK TIGLÉ



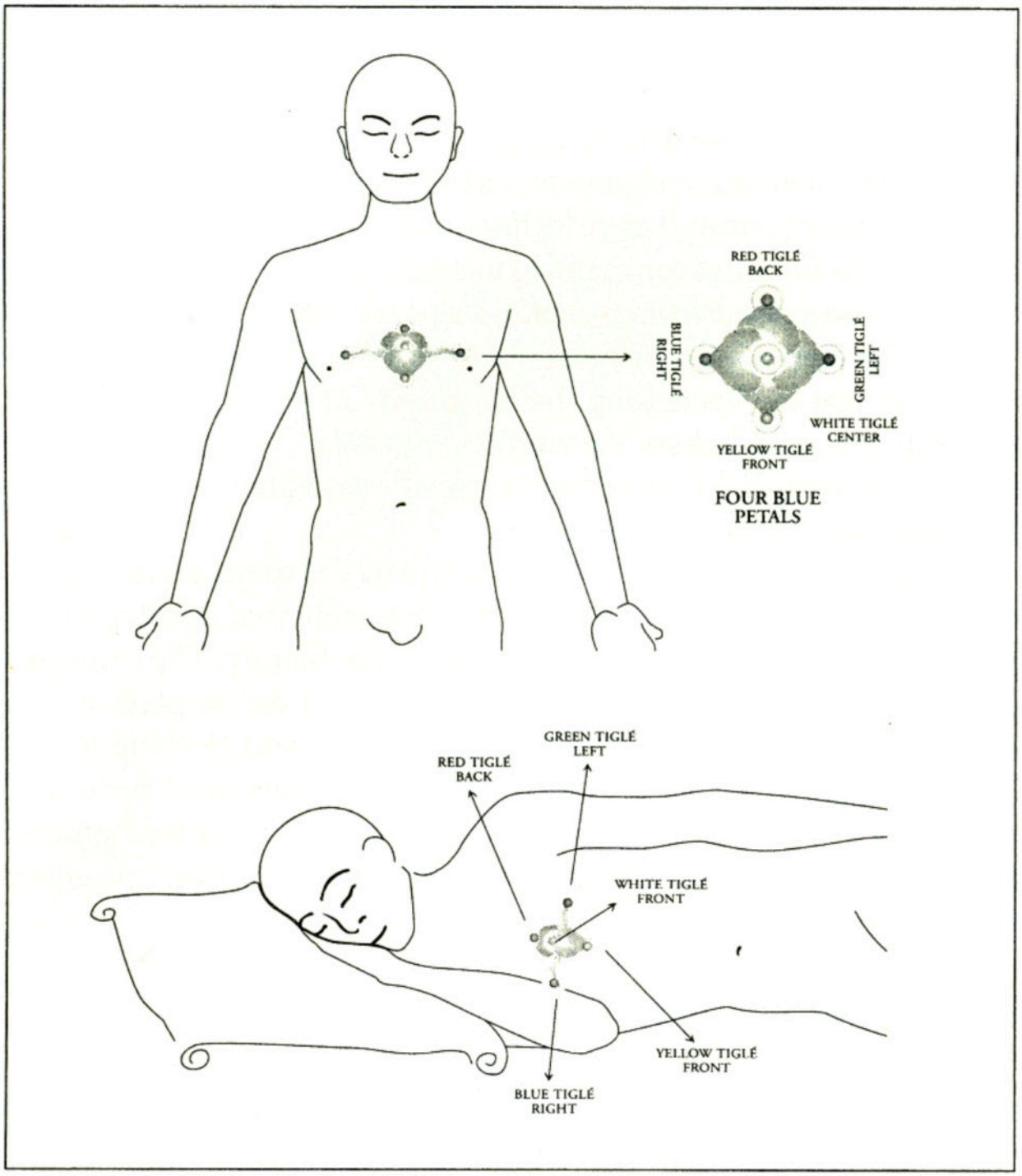
INCREASING CLARITY

After sleeping for approximately two hours, wake and engage in the second part of the practice. Traditionally, this practice is done around midnight, but now everyone has different schedules, so adjust the practice to your life.

Take the same position as in the first practice, men on their right sides and women on their left. A particular form of breathing is to be done: inhale and hold the breath very gently. Lightly clench the perineum, the muscles of the floor of the pelvis, so that you have the sense of pulling the held breath upward. Try to experience the breath as being held just below the navel, compressed by the pressure from below. It is difficult to imagine this kind of breathing, and it may be necessary to experiment a bit until the sense of it is discovered. Better yet is to receive detailed instructions from a teacher.

After holding the breath for a few moments, gently exhale. During the exhalation, relax the muscles in the pelvis, the chest, and the whole body. Completely relax. Repeat this seven times.

The point of focus is the chakra centered slightly above and behind where the eyebrows would meet on the brow. Visualize a white, luminous ball of light (*tiglé**) in the chakra. It is a point of clarity. A tiglé, also known as *bindu,* can be many things, and is translated variously. In one context, it is an energetic quality that can be found in the body, while in another context it can represent unbounded wholeness. As we use it in the practice, the tiglé is a small, insubstantial, luminous sphere of light. The different colored tiglés represent different qualities of consciousness and visualizing them is meant to act as a door into the experience of that quality.



The direction to "visualize" the tiglé does not mean you should picture a static image of a round white light; instead, imagine yourself merging with something really there. Try to feel the tiglé with your imaginal senses, and unify completely with it until only the clarity and luminosity exist. Some people will see the light clearly with their internal visual sense, while others will feel it more than see it. Feeling it is more important than seeing it. Most important is to merge with it entirely.

When connected with the luminous white tiglé in the brow chakra, the mind remains clear and present. As the experience of light increases, becoming more vivid and more inclusive, allow yourself to be absorbed in the light as the mind continues to increase in lucidity. If you sleep in this state, awareness becomes continuous. Developing clarity and continuity of presence is the purpose of this section of the practice. This is what is meant by "increasing the luminosity of dream." Try to connect with the sense behind the word "luminosity," to the actual experience. The metaphor only points to an experience that is deeper than language and visual representation.

Thus, "increasing" is what we call the quality of dreams manifested through this section of the practice. The sense here is of developing or growing toward completion, of generation, of bounty. The example given in the *Mother Tantra* is of a dream in which a dakini plays musical instruments, sings, and brings flowers, fruit, and clothing to the dreamer. Again, this does not mean that the dreams must include a dakini or any other specific image, but as the practitioner strengthens in this part of the practice, the dreams will be characterized by colorful enjoyment.

STRENTHENING PRESENCE

The third part of the practice is done roughly two hours after the second, about four hours into the sleep period. Traditionally, we think of this as two hours before dawn. For this part of the practice, a different position is taken: Lay back on a high pillow. Cross the legs loosely, unlike in meditation posture; it does not matter whether the right or the left leg is on top. The position is somewhat similar to sleeping in a first class seat on an airplane: you recline but are not completely prone. Using a high pillow will help keep sleep light and generate more lucidity in dreams, but pay attention to the comfort of your neck. Do not remain in an uncomfortable position.

The Tibetan Syllable HUNG

Generally we think of doing this kind of practice as an aid in generating clear light experience, but it is also helpful in prolonging the experience once it is known and in supporting the continuity of experience.

Stages in Cessation of Sensory Engagement

Sensory Experience	**Tiglé**		
	Color	Direction	Location
a. Vision	Yellow	East	Front
b. Vision decreasing	Green	North	Left
c. Vision declining	Red	West	Rear
d. Vision ceasing	Blue	South	Right
e. Vision absent	Whitish-Blue	Center	Center

Dreams of clarity (Arise from transpersonal karmic traces)	Non-lucid Lucid
Clear light dreams (Non-duality)	Lucid (beyond subject/object duality)

DREAMS OF CLARITY

As progress is made in dream practice, dreams become clearer and more detailed, and a larger part of each dream is remembered. This is a result of bringing greater awareness into the dream state. Beyond this increased awareness in ordinary dreams is a second kind of dream called the dream of clarity, which arises when the mind and the prana are balanced and the dreamer has developed the capacity to remain in non-personal presence. Unlike the samsaric dream, in which the mind is swept here and there by

karmic prana, in the dream of clarity the dreamer is stable. Though images and information arise, they are based less on personal karmic traces and instead present knowledge available directly from consciousness below the level of the conventional self. This is analogous to the differences in the rough karmic prana of the white channel, which is connected to negative emotion, and the wisdom prana of the red channel. Just as they are both karmic prana— energies involved in experiences of dualism—but one is purer and less deluded than the other, so is the dream of clarity purer and less deluded than the samsaric dream. In the dream of clarity it is as if something is given to or found by the dreamer, as opposed to the samsaric dream in which meaning is projected from the dreamer onto the purity of fundamental experience.

1 Three Kinds of Dreams

There are three types of dream that form a progression in dream practice, although not an exact one: 1) ordinary samsaric dreams, 2) dreams of clarity, and 3) clear light dreams. The first two types are distinguished by the differences of their causes, and in either, the dreamer may be either lucid or non-lucid. In clear light dreams, there is awareness, but no subject-object dichotomy. Clear light dreams occur in non-dual awareness.

SAMSARIC DREAMS

The dreams that most of us have most of the time are the samsaric dreams that arise from karmic traces*. Meaning found in these dreams is meaning that we project into them; it is imputed by the dreamer rather than being inherent in the

dream. This is also the case with meaning in our waking life. This does not make meaningful dreams unimportant any more than it makes the meaning in our waking life unimportant. The process is similar to reading a book. A book is just marks on paper, but because we bring our sense of meaning to it we can take meaning from it. And the meaning of a book, like a dream, is subject to interpretation. Two people can read the same book and have entirely different experiences; one person may change her whole life based on the meaning she has found in the pages, while her friend may find the book only mildly interesting or not even that. The book has not changed. The meaning is projected onto the words by the reader, and then read back.

Ordinary dreaming	Non-lucid
(Arises from personal karmic traces)	Lucid

Dreams of clarity may occasionally arise for anyone, but they are not common until the practice is developed and stable. For most of us, all dreams are samsaric dreams based on our daily lives and emotions. Even though we may have a dream about the teachings, or our teachers, or our practice, or buddhas, or *dakinis**, the dream is still likely to be a samsaric dream. If we are involved in practice with a teacher, then of course we will dream about these things. It is a positive sign to have these dreams because it means that we are engaged in the teachings, but the engagement itself is dualistic and therefore in the realm of samsara. There are better and worse aspects of samsara, and it is good to be fully engaged in practice and the teachings because that is the path to liberation. It is also good not to mistake samsaric dreams for dreams of clarity.

If we make the mistake of believing that samsaric dreams are offering us true guidance, then changing our lives daily, trying to follow the dictates of dreams, can become a full-time job. It is also a way to become stuck in personal drama, believing that all our dreams are messages from a higher, more spiritual source. It is not like that. We should pay close attention to dreams and develop some understanding of which ones have import and which are only the manifestation of the emotions, desires, fears, hopes, and fantasies of our daily life.

CLEAR LIGHT DREAMS

There is a third type of dream that occurs when one is far along the path, the clear light dream. It arises from the primordial prana in the central channel. The clear light is generally spoken of in the teachings about sleep yoga and indicates a state free from dream, thought, and image, but

THE DETACHMENT OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THE OBJECT

By understanding the unconscious we free ourselves from its domination. That is the basis and also the aim of the instructions in our text. The pupil is taught how he must concentrate on the Light of the inmost region, and, at the same time, free himself from all outer and inner bondage. His life-will is guided toward a consciousness without content which none the less permits all contents to exist. The *Hui Ming Ching* says about this detachment :—

"A radiance of Light surrounds the world of the mind.
We forget each other, quiet and pure, all-powerful and empty.
Emptiness is lighted up by the radiance of the Heart of Heaven.
The sea is smooth and mirrors the moon on its surface.
The clouds vanish in blue space.
The mountains shine clear.
Consciousness dissolves itself in vision.
The disk of the moon floats solitary."

This description of the state of fulfilment pictures a psychic condition which could perhaps best be characterized as a detachment of consciousness from the world, and a withdrawal of it to an extra-mundane point, so to speak. In this way, consciousness is both empty and not empty. It is no longer preoccupied with the images of things but merely contains them. The fullness of the world which heretofore pressed upon it, loses none of its richness and beauty, but no longer rules consciousness. The magical claim of things has ceased because the

Mandalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions – Madhu Khanna
Stage IV: Dream Tech & Astral Training
(Also bridges Stage V: Internal Alchemy & Ritual Geometry)

🧩 Summary:
This book is a comprehensive study of mandalas and yantras as sacred visual technologies in Hinduism — revealing their roles as ritual blueprints, cosmic maps, and symbolic engines for invoking deities, unlocking inner powers, and dissolving duality. Where Symbol of Cosmic Unity focused on the Śri Yantra, this work expands the field to include dozens of geometric configurations, used in Tantra, Vedanta, and temple science.

🔷 Core Teachings:
1. Yantra = Spiritual Machine
Yantras are not decorative — they are activated diagrams, used in rituals, and loaded with divine force
Constructed from:
Bindu (center point)
Triangles (divine male/female principles)
Circles (cycles and wholeness)
Squares (material world, protection)
Lotuses (chakras / energy fields)
Mirrors Western seal magick, planetary sigils, and Solomonic gates
2. Mandala = Sacred Cosmos
Mandalas represent the cosmic order and psychic order simultaneously
Used in visualization meditations to center the self in divine reality
Temple layouts and ritual altars reflect mandala architecture
3. Nyasa and Installation
Ritual practitioners install the diagram onto the body
Every point on the yantra corresponds to a body part, deity, or mantra
This is energetic software installation — aligning the microcosm to the macrocosm
4. Deity Embodiment
Each yantra is linked to a specific deity or force
When meditated upon properly, the yantra awakens that archetype within the practitioner

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:

Sacred Diagram Engine

➤ Import yantra forms as interface schematics for specific functions (e.g. protection, ascension, transformation)

Dream Portal Structures

➤ Use mandalas as visual or ritual gates to enter dream zones, memory temples, or planetary temples

Energetic Software Installation

➤ Combine Nyasa with Notoria, Paulina, or Picatrix angelic work for cross-tradition energy embedding

Yantra-Angel Fusion Grid

➤ Crosswalk Hindu deities with angelic planetary rulers for ritual system expansion

✨ Unique Contributions:

Shows how to construct, activate, and embody sacred diagrams

Proves that geometry is not abstract — it's alive with spiritual law

Offers ritual interface blueprints for energy modulation and inner temple construction

🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:

"Mandalas and yantras are divine circuits — ritualized geometry that animates the invisible."

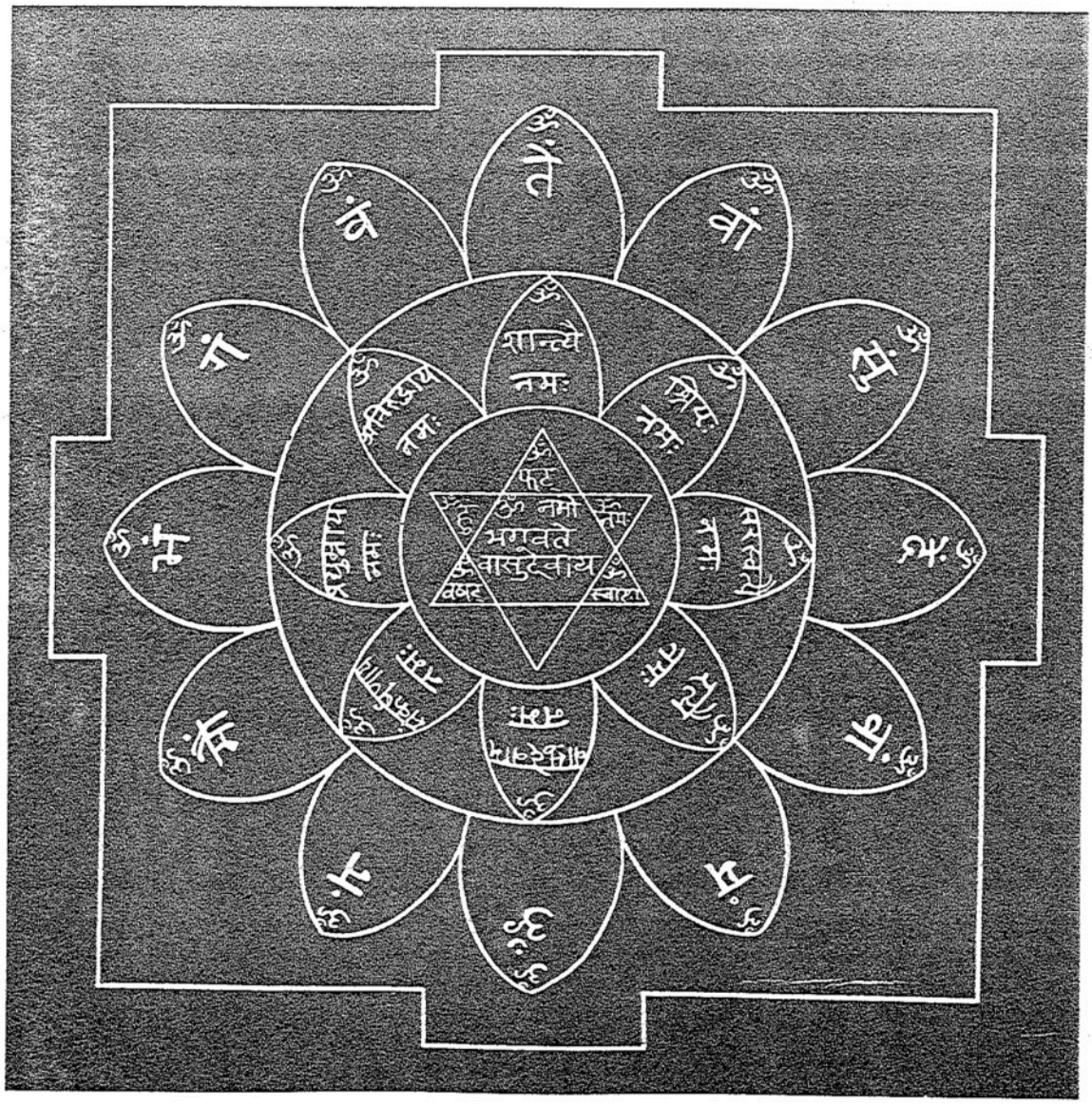
No screenshots required — unless you want to create visual overlays of mandalas, yantra-planet crosswalks, or chakra-based activation diagrams.

Symbol of Cosmic Unity – Madhu Khanna
Stage IV: Dream Tech & Astral Training
(Also supports Stage V: Internal Alchemy, Chi & Lightbody)

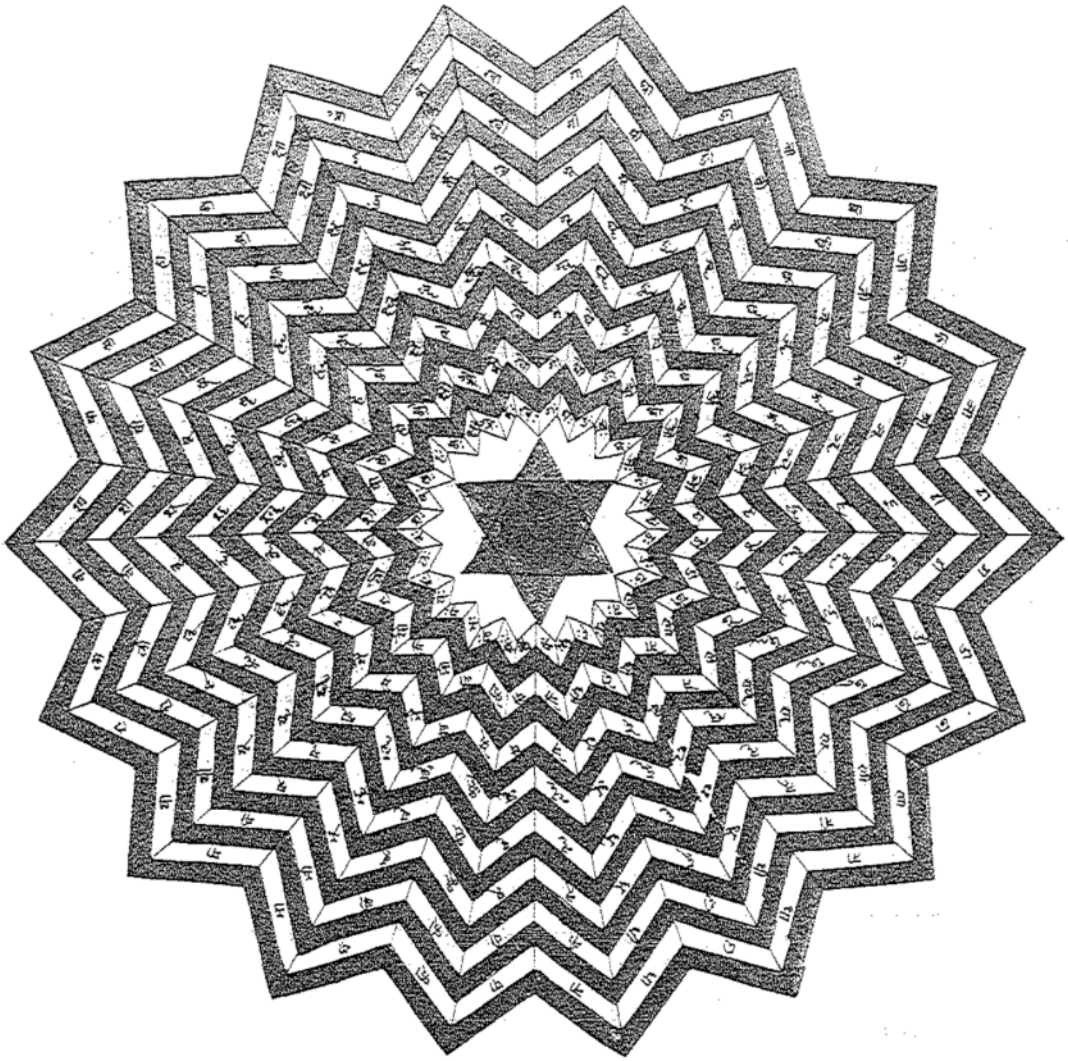
🧩 Summary:
Symbol of Cosmic Unity is a deep scholarly and esoteric exploration of the Śri Yantra — the supreme diagram in Tantric Hinduism that represents the cosmic womb, divine geometry, and the path of return to the Absolute (Bindu). Madhu Khanna decodes the Śri Yantra as both a ritual structure and a symbol of metaphysical unity, revealing its function as a spiritual operating system embedded in form.

🔺 Core Teachings:
1. Structure of the Śri Yantra
9 interlocking triangles (4 upward = Shiva, 5 downward = Shakti)
Surround the Bindu — the primordial point of unity
Surrounded by petal lotuses, gates, and square perimeters
2. Ritual Function
Used in Puja (worship), Nyasa (body activation), and Chakra alignment
Each part corresponds to:
Deities
Planetary forces
Chakras
Mantras
3. Philosophical Symbolism
Represents the manifestation and reabsorption of the cosmos
Bindu = origin and end of all forms
The act of gazing, meditating, or tracing the Yantra is a ritual of universal reintegration
4. Inner Visualization
The practitioner becomes the Śri Yantra:
Bindu = crown
Triangles = chakras
Outer squares = body, senses, and world
It is a sacred map of inward spiritual ascent

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:
Sacred Geometry Interface
➤ Śri Yantra = foundational spiritual schematic (like a divine motherboard)
Bindu = OS Kernel
➤ Spiritual singularity point; mirrors Golden Flower, Lightbody embryo, Merkavah center
Yantra-Angel Overlay
➤ Match deities of triangles to planetary/angelic forces for cross-tradition synergy
Dream Gate / Astral Seal
➤ Śri Yantra used as visual stargate for inner journeying and energy pattern alignment
✨ Unique Contributions:
Introduces a multi-layered ritual diagram that integrates mantra, deity, geometry, and consciousness
Gives symbolic access to the Absolute through form
Offers a non-verbal metaphysical system that resonates with Western sigil and seal magick
🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:
“The Śri Yantra is not an image — it is a metaphysical machine. A living symbol that encodes creation, dissolution, and the way home.”
No screenshots required — unless you later wish to include the Śri Yantra diagram, chakra overlays, or ritual sequence diagrams.

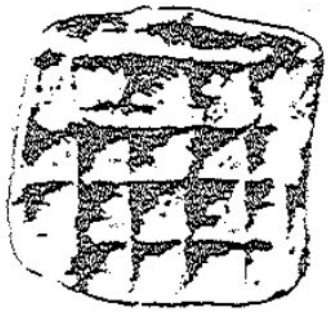


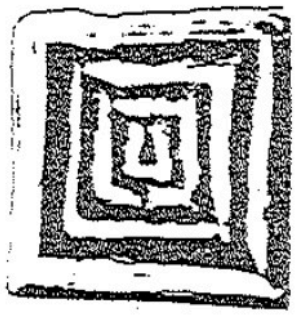
Yantra of Vishnu, the Preserver, the second god of the Hindu trinity, inscribed with sacred sound-symbols



Yantra depicting the evolution and involution of the cosmos. The expanding and contracting currents of vibration symbolized by the Sanskrit letters form a web-like image, as the cosmos emanates and returns again to the primordial centre, the One. Rajasthan, c. 19th century. gouache on paper

Kanudi coin (1st century AD) and seals from Mohenjo-daro (c. 2500 BC) with swastikas and square patterns





Awakening one's inner centre implies gathering one's self into a single creative point and integrating and balancing its expansion into a totality. To centre one's self is essentially a way towards inner awakening. The quest of this centre is the pivot around which yantra symbolism revolves.

The symbols of Indian art echo this fundamental truth and direct man's spiritual journey towards the goal of transmutation. Visual metaphors through which we move beyond our material order, they serve as cosmic cross-points by means of which our contact with nature at large can be expanded, to tap higher and more unified levels of experience. Whether these symbols are as monumental as Hindu temples or as small as coin-sized yantras, they mark a multitude of different stages on an individual's spiritual pilgrimage. They provide halting places, sites of rest and support where the seeker gains an awareness of the universe in its totality and discovers his inner identity with the single, immutable centre, as if the whole universe were condensed in him. Thus the symbols stimulate man to explore and reveal this centre which is a link between himself and the cosmos.

The use of abstract mystic symbols can be traced back to early Indian history. Among the artifacts excavated in the remains of the Harappan Culture (c. 3000 BC) are intaglio seals with designs that resemble yantras. A number of seals depict the swastika symbol while others are marked with a cross, a pattern of parallel lines intersecting into a grid-square or a composition of square-on-square. The seal designs, like yantras, are conceived on a cardinally orientated square. In subsequent periods the Vedic altars (c. 2000 BC), pregnant with cosmic symbolism, were conspicuously abstract in design (see Chapter 6). It was in tantrism (AD 700–1200, the tantric renaissance period) that the use of mystic symbols was fully revived.

Tantrism marked one of the most distinct and revolutionary phases of Indian religious history, synthesizing many heterodox elements. One of the ways in which tantric lore is distinguished from the non-tantric tradition is in its intensive use of sacred formulae and symbolism. Tantrism is basically a ritual-orientated system. Tantric sādhanā (ritual worship) requires the practice of yogic techniques and concentrated visualizations, and the linear compositions of the yantra are conceived precisely to meet the needs of such meditation. These mystic diagrams are ideally suited to a series of inner visualizations, growing and unfolding as links, marking stages of consciousness. Hence yantras were found to be an indispensable constituent of tantric sādhanā.[1] All sects and sub-sects of tantrism use abstract symbols[2] and yantras as part of their ritual initiation ceremony and daily worship, as means to attaining the adept's spiritual goal.

The literature of the Tantras is vast, and there are many texts[3] dealing exclusively with yantras. In addition, there are a number of commentaries in a few secular languages other than Sanskrit, such as Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil and Assamese, in which yantras are discussed.

Yantras have survived in use, though the last remnants of their living tradition may still be found only in isolated areas in India. They have been transmitted through family groups, pupil-guru descents and esoteric tantric groups like the Nātha Saints of Bengal, Tamil Siddhāis in South India and the Kaulas in Kashmir. Their

ritual use and esoteric significance have been kept a closely guarded secret from the uninitiated, and their esoteric meaning and mystical associations are learned from a spiritual preceptor under strict discipline, who enforces a yogic regime.

Concept of the yantra

The Sanskrit word 'yantra' derives[4] from the root 'yam' meaning to sustain, hold or support the energy inherent in a particular element, object or concept. In its first meaning, 'yantra' may refer to any kind of mechanical contrivance which is harnessed to aid an enterprise. A yantra in this sense, therefore, is any sort of machine or instrument such as is used in architecture, astronomy, alchemy, chemistry, warfare or recreation. A Sanskrit text of the eleventh century AD, *Samaraṅganasūtradhāra*,[5] on the science of architecture, gives vivid descriptions of the making and operating of such mechanical yantras as a wooden flying bird, wooden aeroplanes meant to fly with hot mercury as fuel, male and female robot figures, etc. The vast observatories built in Delhi and Jaipur under the patronage of Jai Singh (1686–1734) are called Jantar-Mantar, as their massive structures are astronomical 'instruments' (yantras) for recording heavenly phenomena.

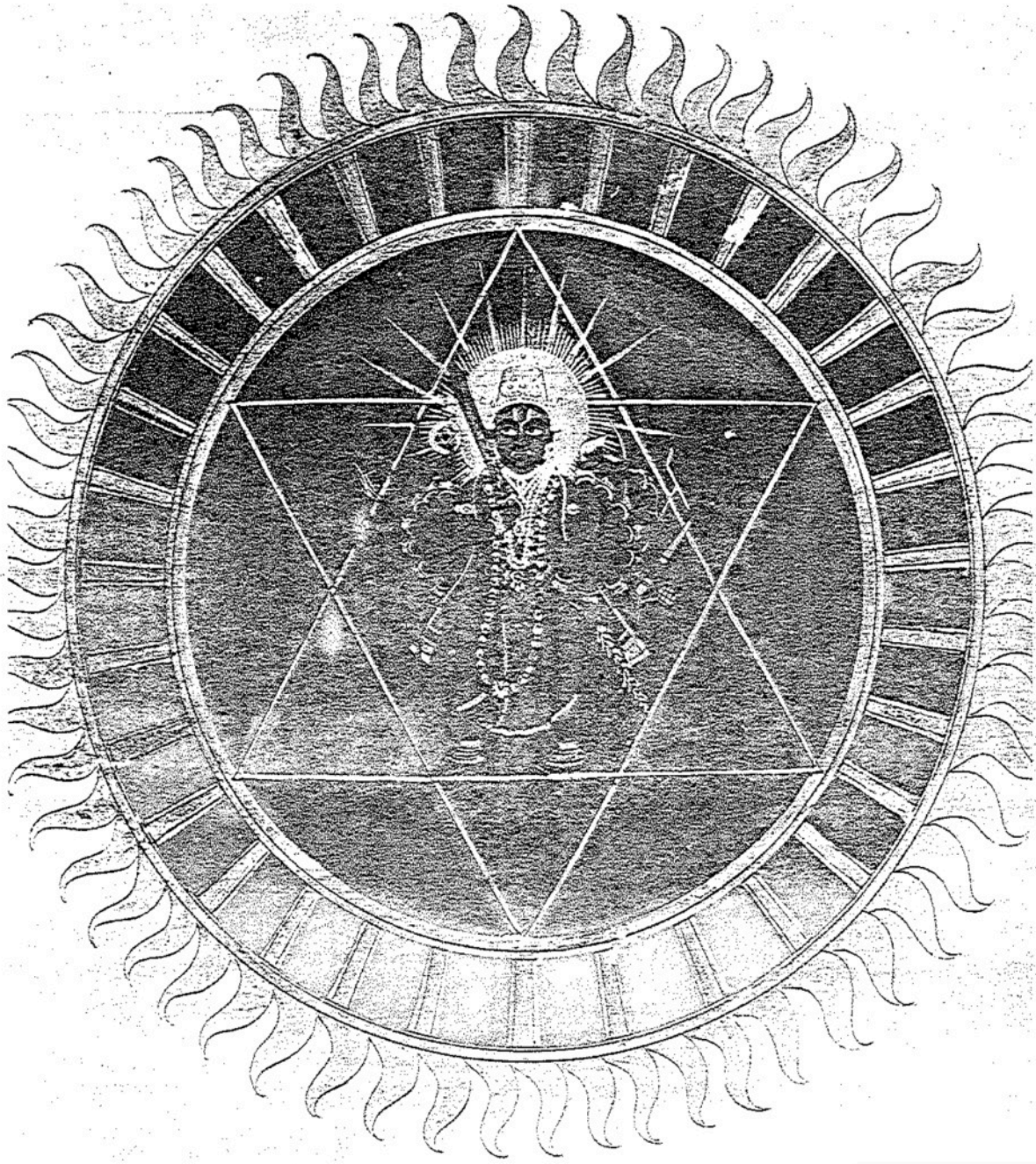
The meaning of the term yantra has been expanded to refer to religious enterprises, and has acquired a special theological significance. Mystic yantras are aids to and the chief instruments of meditative discipline. Basically a yantra used in this context and for this purpose is an abstract geometrical design intended as a 'tool' for meditation and increased awareness.

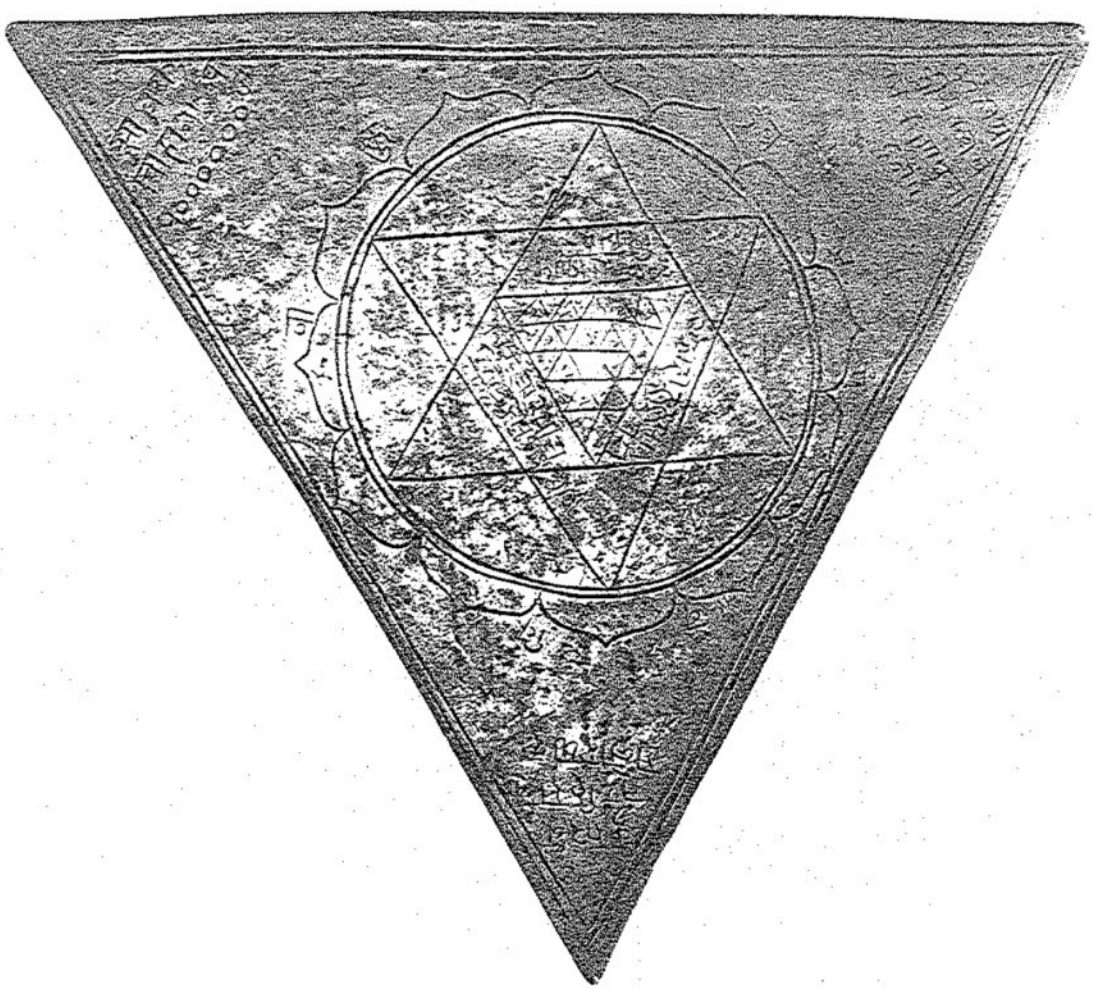
Form – function – power

Mystic yantras are an amalgam of three principles: the form principle (Ākriti-rūpa), the function-principle (Kriyā-rūpa), and the power-principle (Śakti-rūpa).[6]

They are, first of all, believed to reveal the inner basis of the forms and shapes abounding in the universe. Just as, whatever the outer structure, all matter is made of an intrinsic basic unity, the atom, so each aspect of the world can be seen in its structural form as a yantra. As the scientist sees the final picture of the world in the orderly, simple, atomic structures in which certain primal shapes appear as a harmonized 'whole', so the Indian shilpi-yogins (makers of ritual art) seek to identify the innermost structure of the universe by concentrating the variegated picture of world-appearances through intense yogic vision into simple form-equations. A yantra, then, can be considered an ultimate form-equation of a specific energy manifesting in the world. These simple form-equations are held to epitomize the real nature of the cosmos as abstracted from the concrete. 10, 11

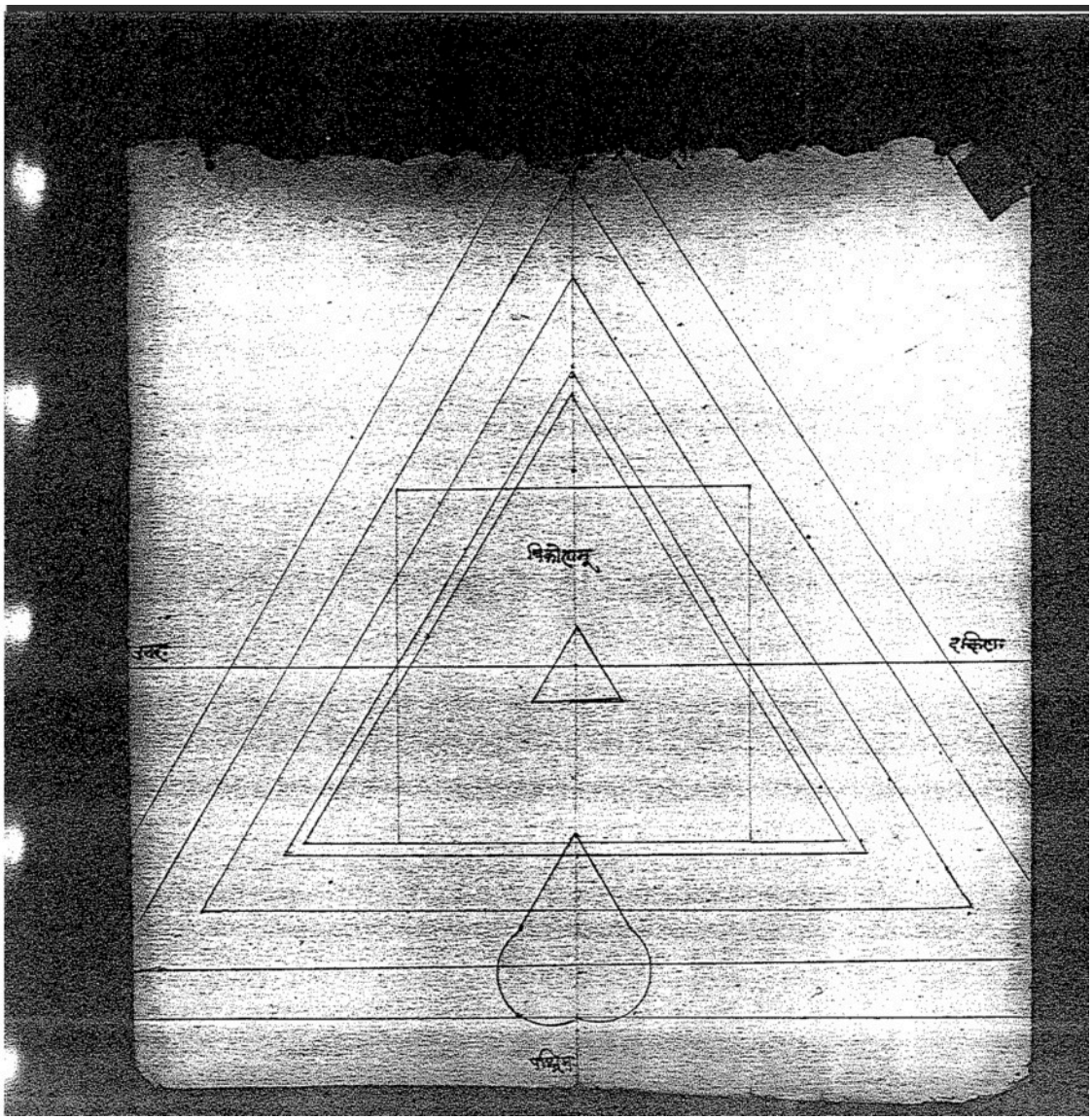
In its widest application, Ākriti-rūpa refers to the inner or hidden form of structures, so that any structure, from an atom to a star, has its Ākriti-rūpa yantra. Thus a flower or a leaf has an outer structure which is immediately perceptible, but it also has an inner form, which generally consists of a skeletal framework in which all its linear forms intersect with a central axis or nucleus: all forms have a gross

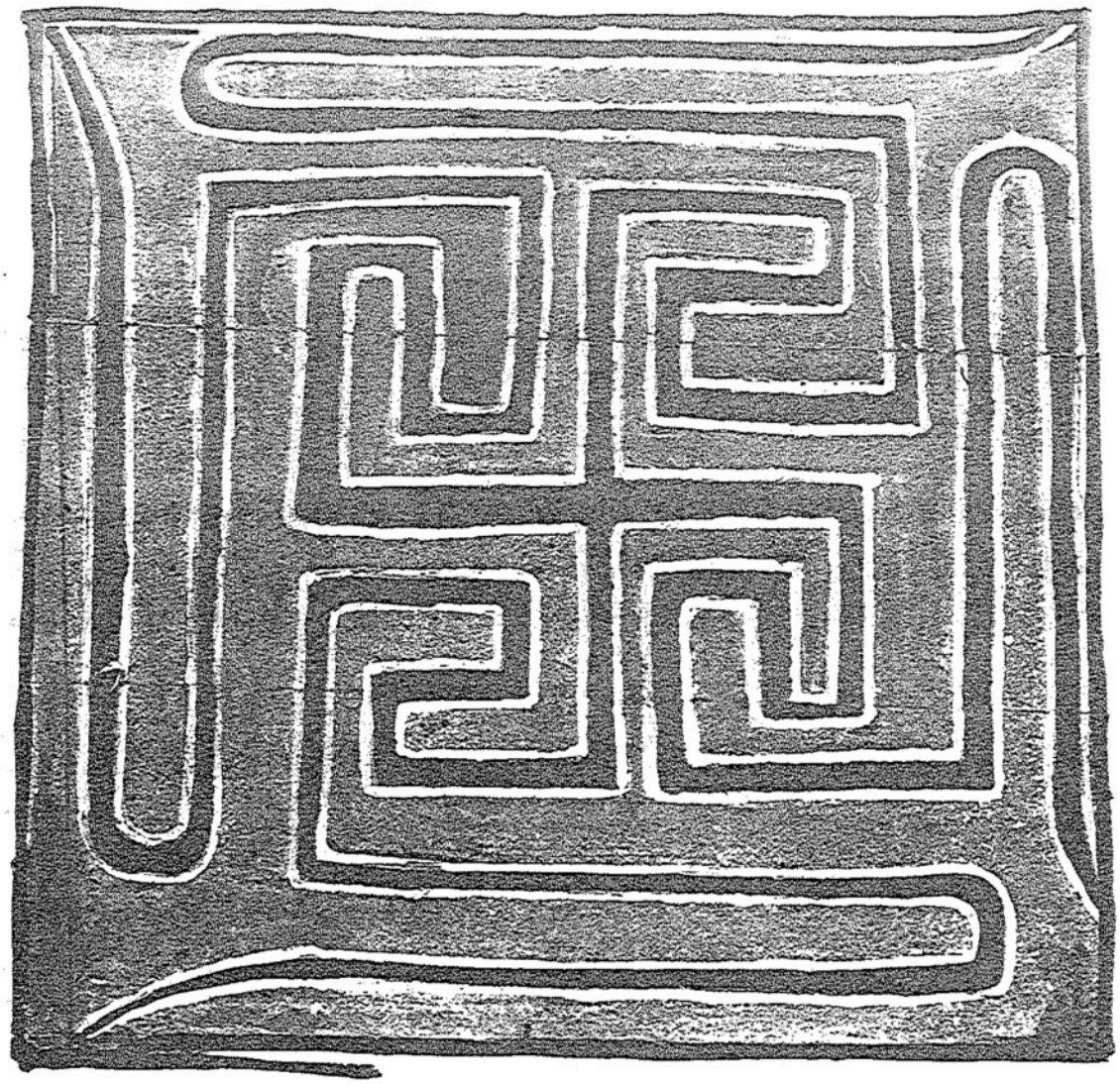


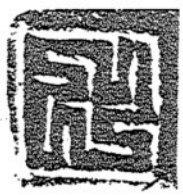


2. The primal triangle, emblem of cosmic energy as Śakti, the female principle, supporting the archetypal shapes of a Devī (goddess) yantra. South India, *c.* 18th century. Copper plate

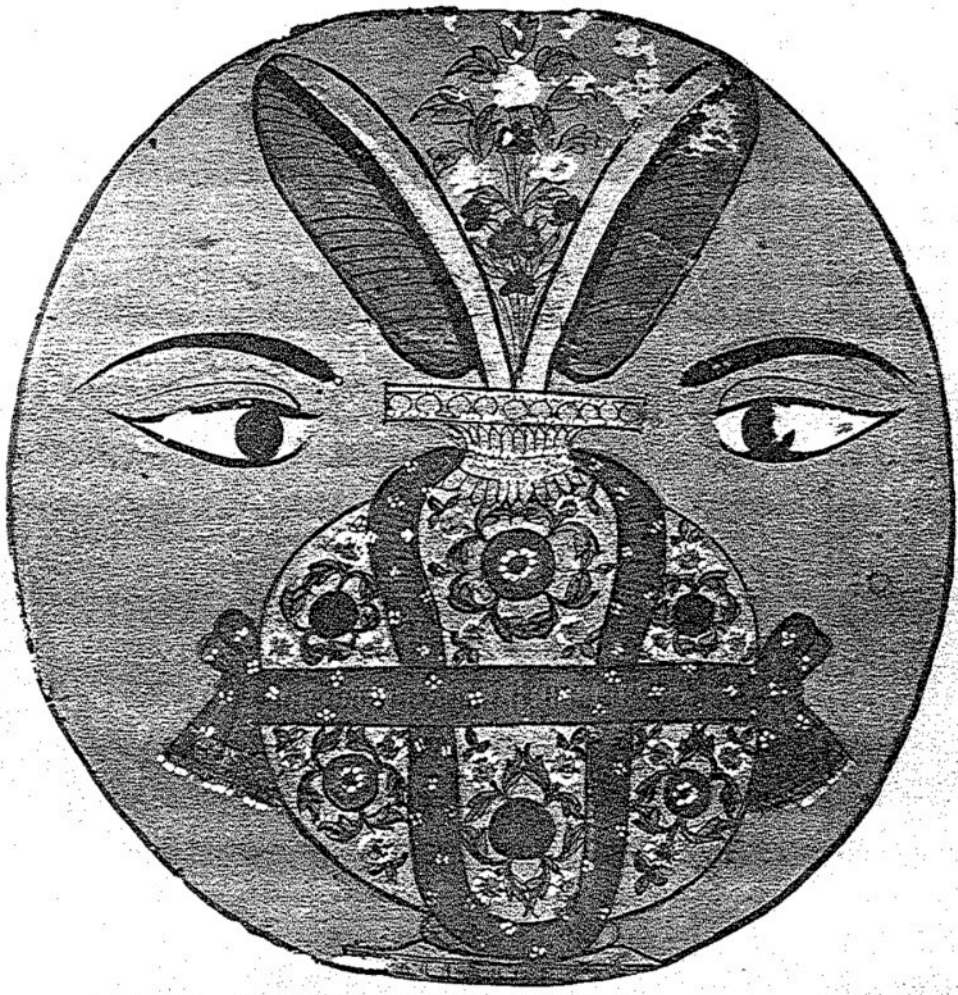
3 Devī yantra based on the yoni-shaped plan of the ancient Vedic fire altars (yoni-kuṇḍa). The archetypal shapes of Vedic altars and their ritual practices have both survived in tantric worship. Rajasthan, *c.* 19th century. Ink on paper


त्रिकोणम्
उत्तरः
दक्षिणः
पश्चिमः



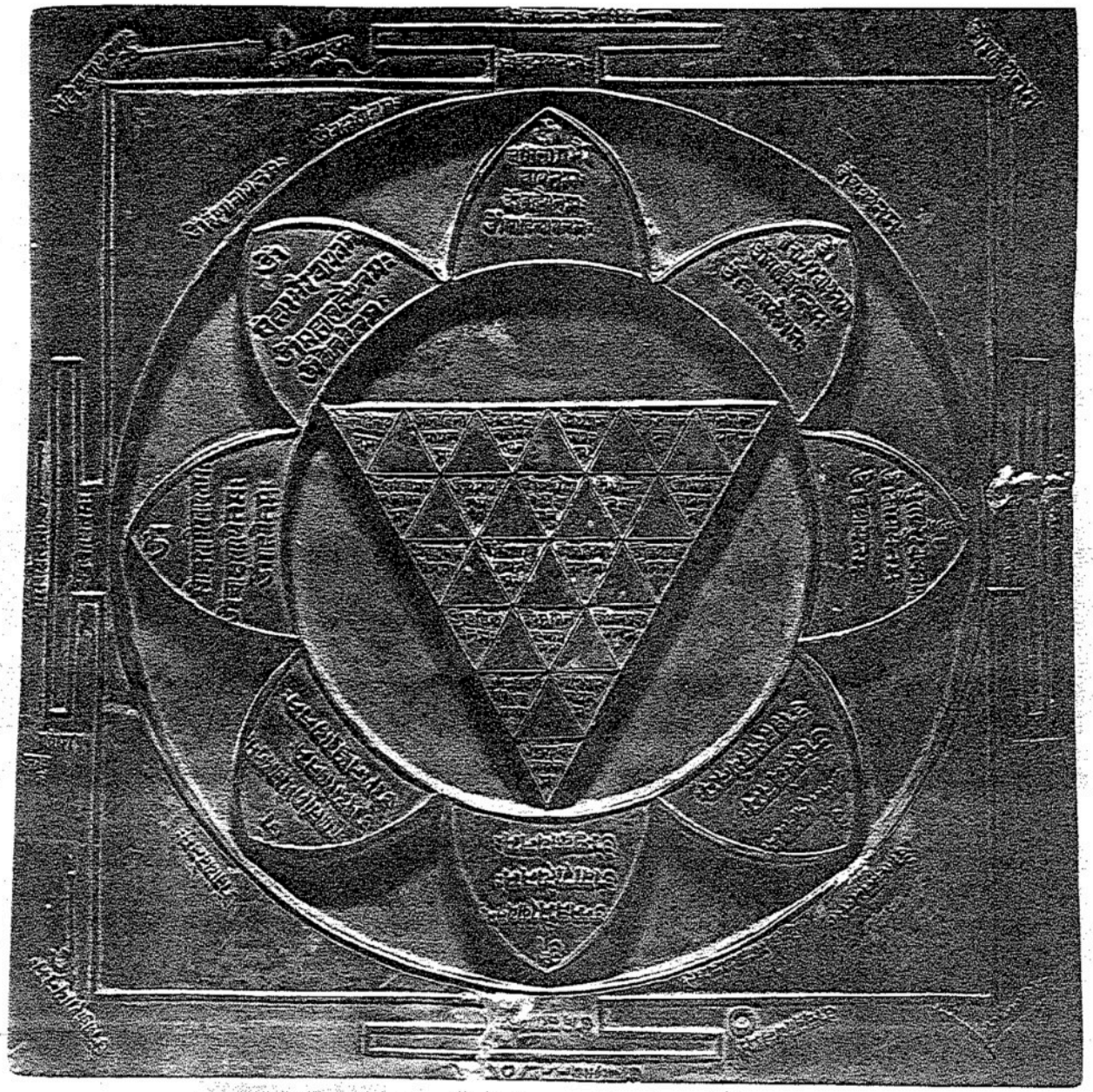


4 Swastika Yantra employing the ancient solar symbol of auspiciousness, a primal symbolic form. Rajasthan, c. 19th century. Gouache on paper. Right, a swastika seal from Mohenjo-daro dating from c. 2500 BC

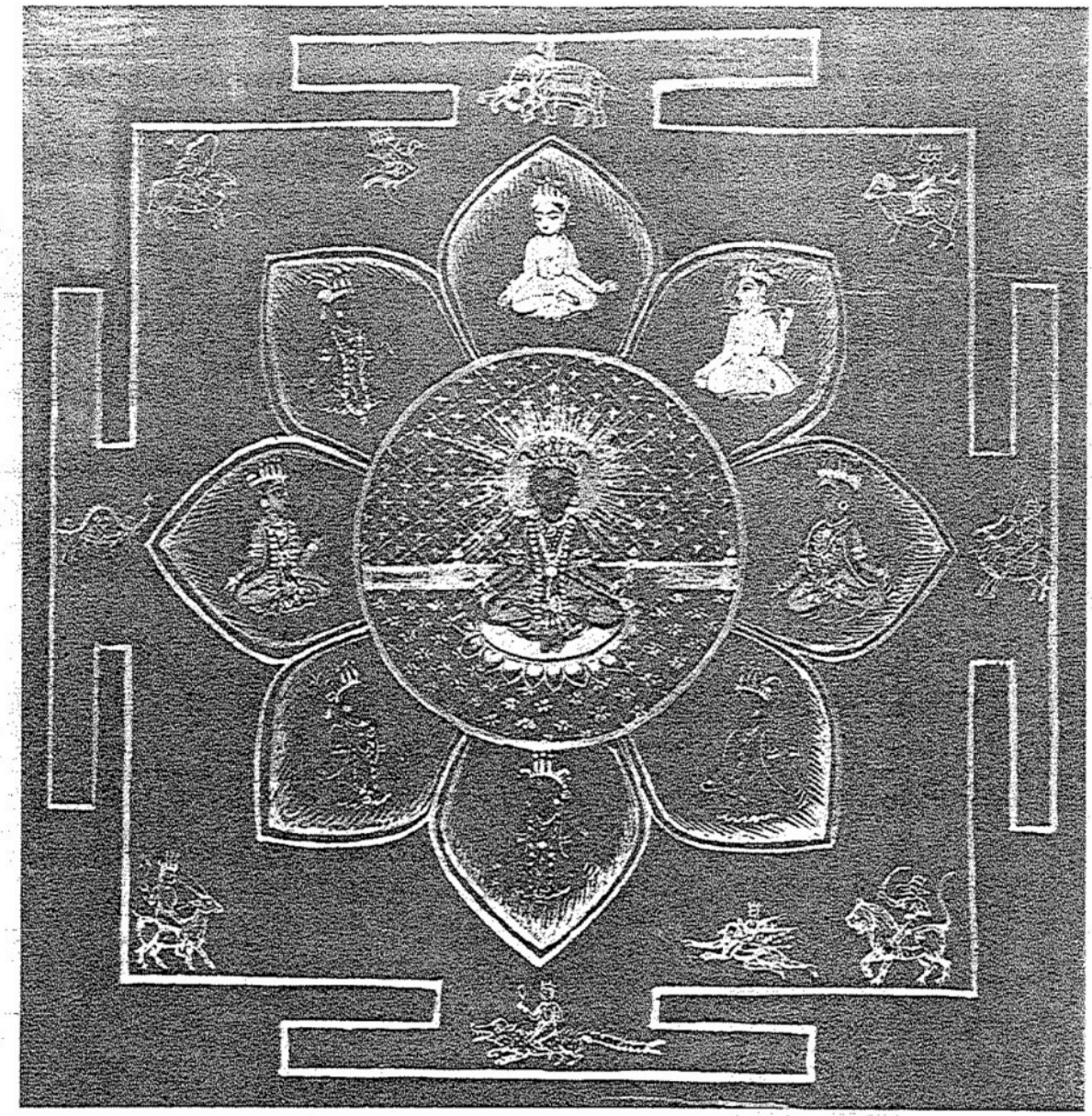


5 'Rise O Jar that art the Brahman itself, thou art the soul of the God and grantest all success' (*Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, x, 156). The Maṅgala Ghata, the ceremonial water jar, sometimes substitutes for a yantra diagram during ritual worship. Rajasthan, *c.* 19th century. Gouache on paper

6. Maṅgala Yantra, worshipped for good fortune and success (maṅgala). The energy of the yantra's deity is expressed in the inscribed sound-syllables or mantras. Allahabad, 18/19th century. Copper plate



7 A vibration-pattern of the universe results and the yantra's static shape is made kinetic when the inscribed mantras are chanted in ritual worship. Rajasthan, c. 1700. Copper plate



8 Sūrya (Sun) Yantra with images of the deities of the nine planets. A yantra is a celestial circle of the gods. Every yantra's linear framework supports many clusters of deities, like sparks from the fiery nucleus of the central deity. The outermost periphery is protected by guardian deities who forbid negative force to enter the holy space. Seed mantras are often substituted for the images of these deities, or the appropriate deities may be visualized in the spaces of the yantra by the sādhaka during meditation. *Sarvasiddānta-tattvacūḍāmaṇī*, Punjab, c. 1839. Gouache on paper

microcosm), every symbol in a yantra is ambivalently resonant in inner-outer
67 synthesis, and is associated with the subtle body and aspects of human consciousness (see Chapter 5). Thus, for instance, the bindu in a yantra is cosmic when viewed as the emblem of the Absolute Principle but psychological when it is related to the adept's spiritual centre. By aligning these two planes of awareness, the yantra translates psychic realities into cosmic terms and the cosmos into psychic planes.

Each of these dimensions of yantra syntax can be equated with all the others. Thus, the deity motif may be assumed in the mantra – in several instances the symbol of the deity is the seed sound (bīja-mantra) inscribed in the centre of the yantra (see Chapter 2); or a mantra may be related simultaneously to a deity (Chapter 3) and to body-cosmos parallels, or the human body with its cosmic identities may itself become an 'instrument' – a yantra – during the yogic process (Chapter 5).

Tantrism has evolved the most complex networks of these interactions, and if distinctions may be made between the syntactic dimensions, none can exist without the others since they are all mutually inclusive.

The symbolic syntax thus integrates all the dimensions of the tantric universe. It is based on the holistic view of life characteristic of Indian thought. In the ultimate sense, the separation of elements of whatever kind is illusory. The distinctions between psychic and cosmic, deities and mantras, are contingent. The fundamental aim of ritual and meditation on the yantra is to fuse all the dimensions into a state of oneness. Herein lies the symbolic unity of the yantra.

The complex nature of yantra syntax corrects the view of some scholars who have wrongly labelled all yantras 'magic' diagrams. Diagrams used for occult purposes form a separate category (see Chapter 8) which has evolved within the tradition, and the role of such yantras is peripheral in comparison with that of yantras for meditation.

Varieties and types

Yantras are most commonly drawn on paper, or engraved on metals or rock crystal, although any flat surface such as floors or walls may be used, especially for temporary yantras. Three-dimensional yantras may be on a small scale, or on the scale of architecture (see Chapter 7).

An inexhaustible number of fresh yantras may be made by rearranging the basic shapes and/or reshuffling the mantras. With each fresh mantra-combination a new yantra is created. Reciprocally, a particular yantra illustrating a specific religious idea may be composed in countless variations. Thus, for instance, one tantric text
34–46 describes how the sixteen yantras of the Moon Goddesses (Nityā-Śaktis) can be expanded into 9,216 variations simply by re-assigning their mantras.[10]

Yantras in one tradition may borrow elements from another, and their great abundance presupposes many levels of classification. Yantras exist in the Vedic,[11] Tantric and Buddhist traditions,[12] each of which has adapted the use of yantras to its

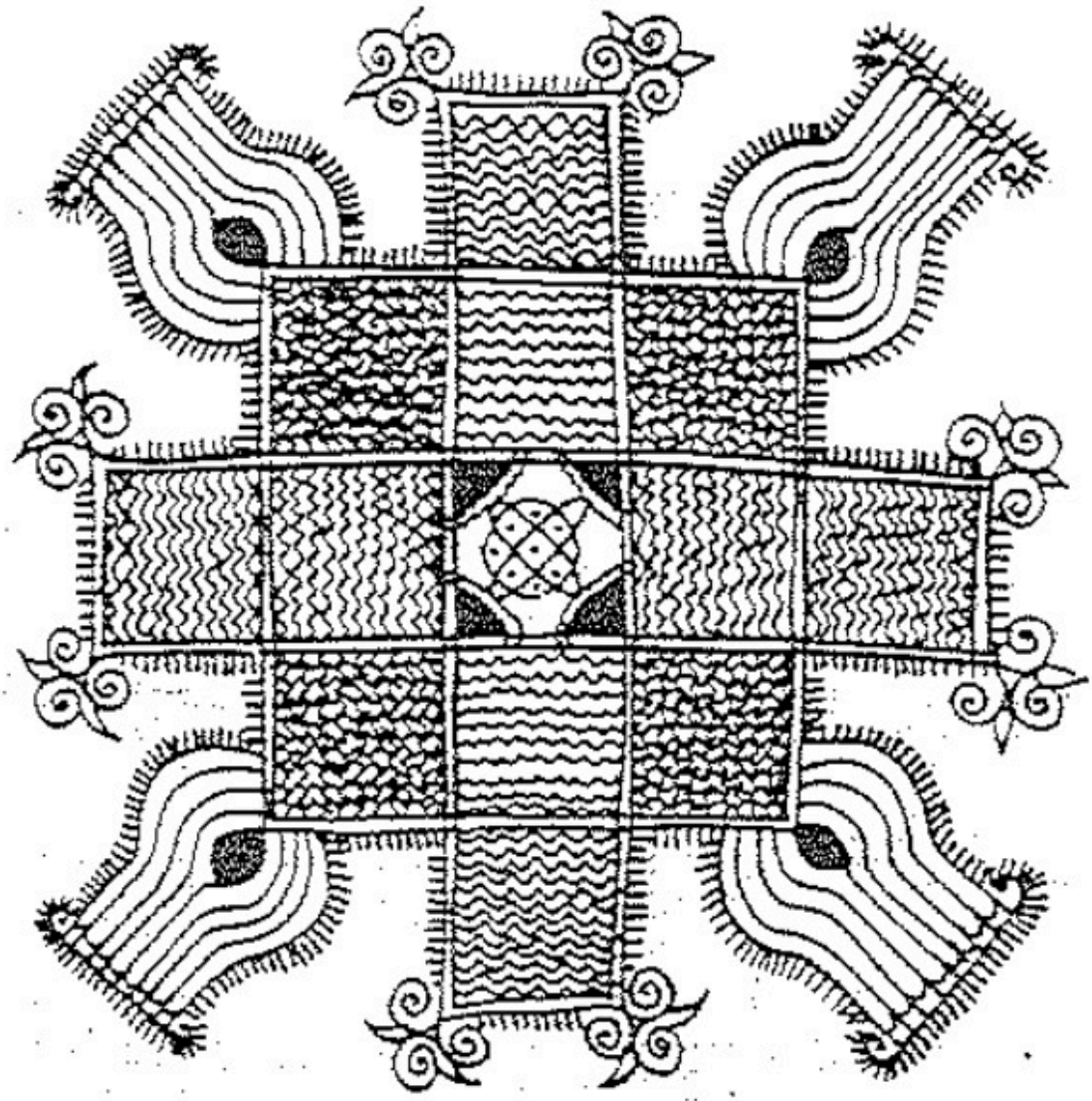
own specific metaphysical ideas. Vedic yantras are the oldest; Tantric yantras are the most numerous and varied; and Buddhist maṇḍalas (literally 'circle'), though they differ from yantras in being complex combinations of images within a rigorous linear framework, convey the same ideas, serve the same religious purposes, and have made a distinctive contribution to the yantra as a living form. Many yantras spring from Jaina sources[13] and embody speculative ideas of Jainism.

Yantras may be grouped according to their uses. Some 'architectural yantras' are used as prime analogues for the ground plans of temples (see Chapter 7). Others are employed in astrology.[14] Primarily, however, yantras are used in ritual worship (see Chapters 4, 5). There are yantras devoted to male deities, to female deities, conjointly to two deities, or to various aspects of a single female deity (see Chapter 3). Finally, some yantras are meant for occult purposes, and many of these are used as talismans (see Chapter 8). In addition there are several kinds of purely abstract designs of a symbolic kind, akin to yantras and maṇḍalas, drawn by women on the floors and walls of houses with rice-paste or powdered colours during festivals and other religious ceremonies. These auspicious signs are known as Ālipanā or Rañgoli, and are found all over India.

Ālipanā, a sacred diagram drawn on floors with rice-paste during religious festivals

In Hindu tradition the pot-bellied earthenware or copper jar also serves as a yantra. Called the Maṅgala Chata, decorated with auspicious signs and holding ritual ingredients, the pot is symbolically the vessel that holds the nectar of immortality. Its spherical shape is an apt analogy to the universe, and the water with which it is filled symbolizes the cosmic elemental forces. The worship of the pot as a complete yantra is very common in Bengal. When not used as a substitute for a geometrical yantra, it is generally placed before icons or in the centre of floor maṇḍalas as an auspicious symbol. In Tibetan tradition, the jar (Kumbha) is used to aid meditation, during which the aspirant visualizes the entire pantheon emerging from the cosmic waters symbolically contained in the jar. Such an image is also revered in Jain and tantric traditions.

No external symbol, however sophisticated, is a substitute for the body-yantra. With its physical and psychological planes, the human body is considered in tantrism to be one of the most powerful instruments of spiritual transformation: it represents the physical substratum of the divine, where the evolutionary unfolding of the being takes place, a repository of inexhaustible power which can be tapped in meditation (see Chapter 5). Only by mobilizing and awakening it from its slumber can one come to the fullest appreciation of its divine grace. 'The eternal essence is within, so what need is there to seek for outer means for liberation?'[15] The body is the sacred centre of all ritual, formula, offering, meditation, liturgy: 'Here (within the body) is the Ganges and the Jamunā, here are Prayāga and Benares, the Sun and the



Moon. Here are the sacred places: here the pīṭhas [pilgrimage centres] and the upa-pīṭhas – I have not seen a place of pilgrimage, an abode of bliss like my body.'[16]
 Indeed, 'The yantra which is one's body is the best of all yantras.'[17]

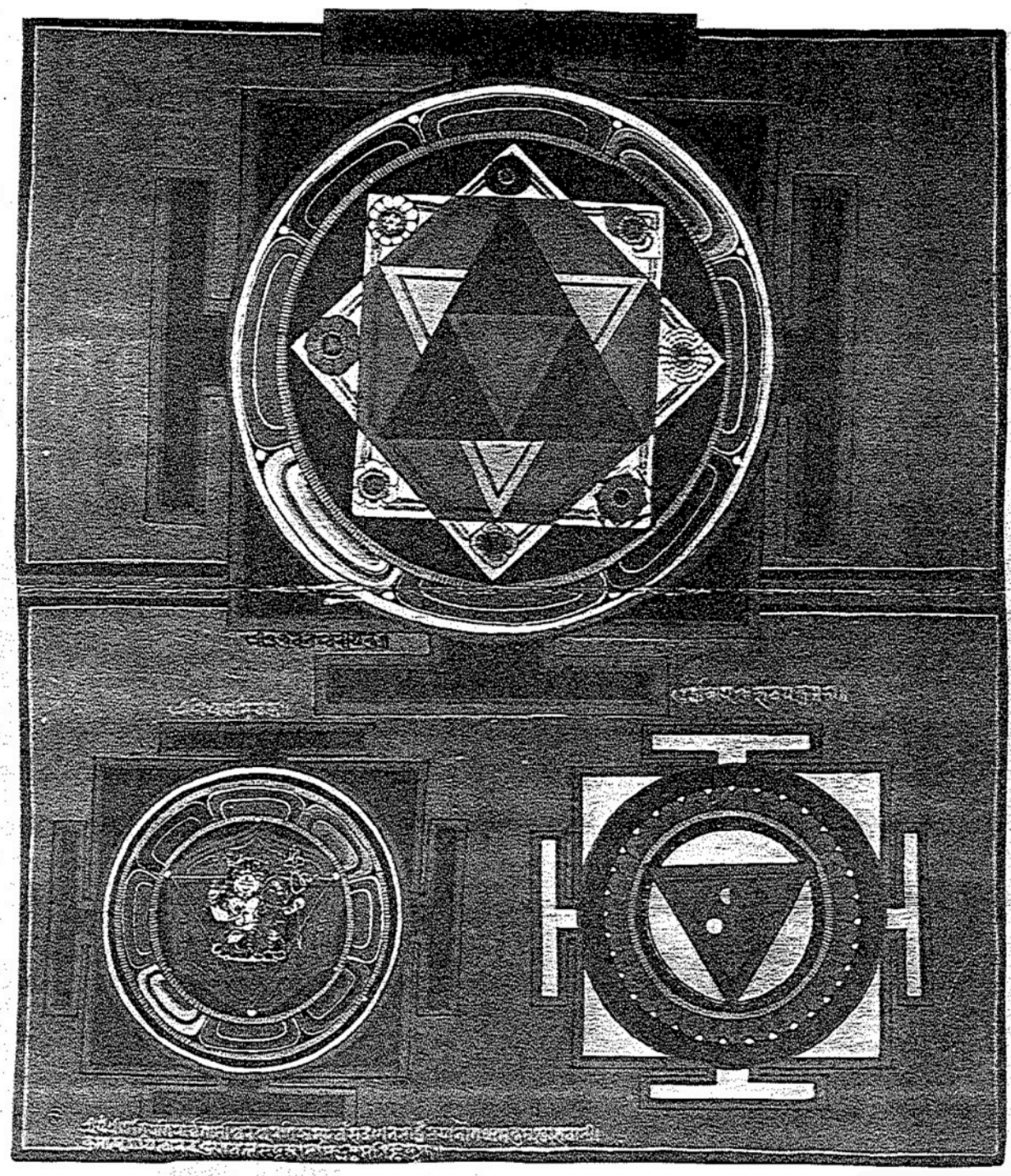
Yantra as archetypal wholeness

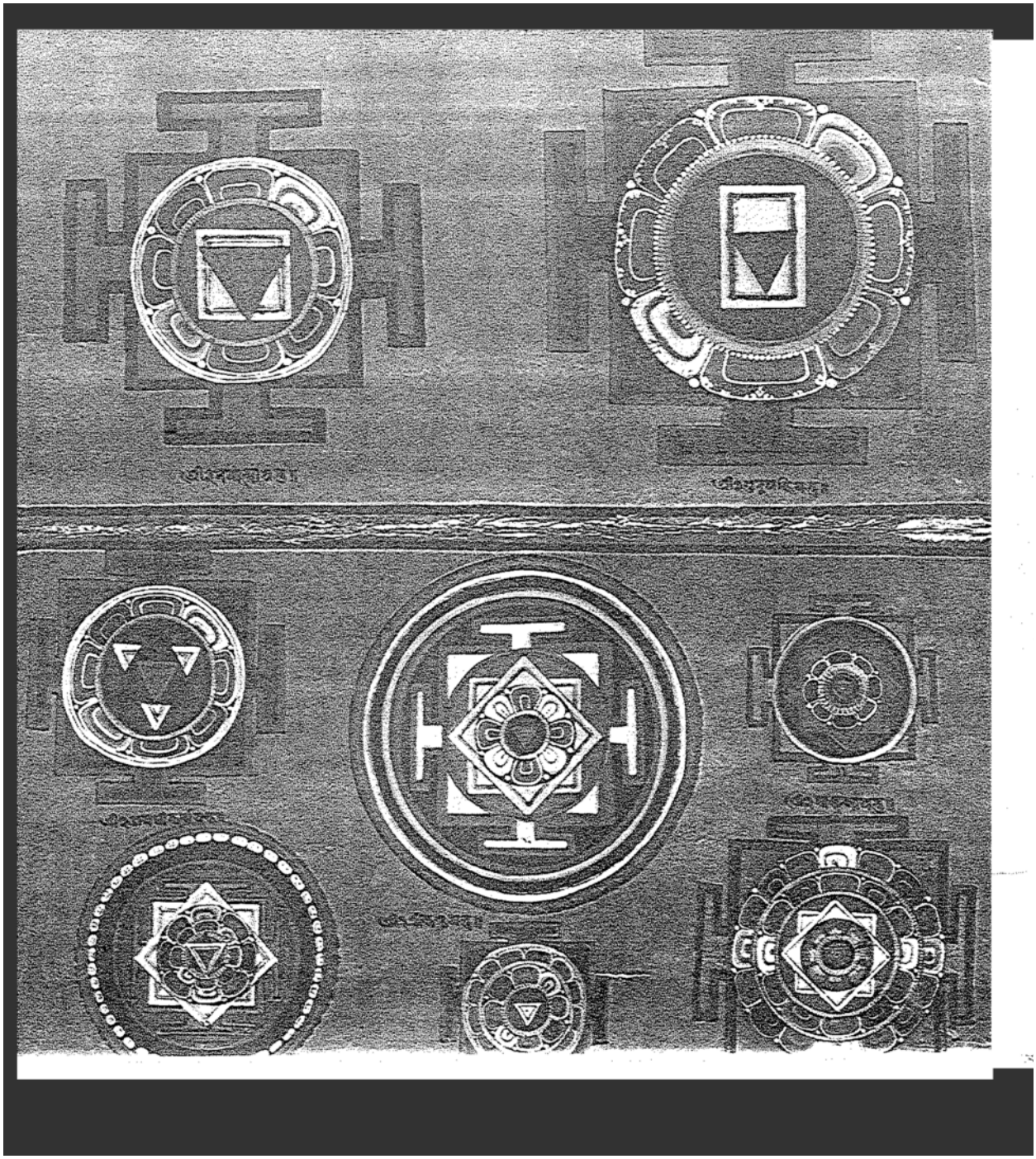
Modern man, unaware of archaic mysteries, spontaneously draws or dreams maṇḍala/yantra-like patterns when he is achieving a fusion of opposite forces within his psyche. Jung's extensive researches have demonstrated that such a symbol is not 'manufactured' but discovered through primal inner sources. It springs from a universal human compulsion and embodies 'timeless' universal principles in archetypal language which is physically and spiritually not remote from life. This is evident in the impressive frequency with which similar archetypal forms appear in the various cultures of the world. Maṇḍala-like forms are to be found, for instance, in the crystalline patterns of Islamic art, in the sand-paintings of the Navaho Indians, in Celtic motifs and the circular dance-forms of the Sufi order. Hence yantras are not merely religious signs of a particular cult but constitute objective expression. They are primordial 'imprints' of consciousness – 'shapes of conception' that cut across all cultural barriers and are the heritage of all mankind.

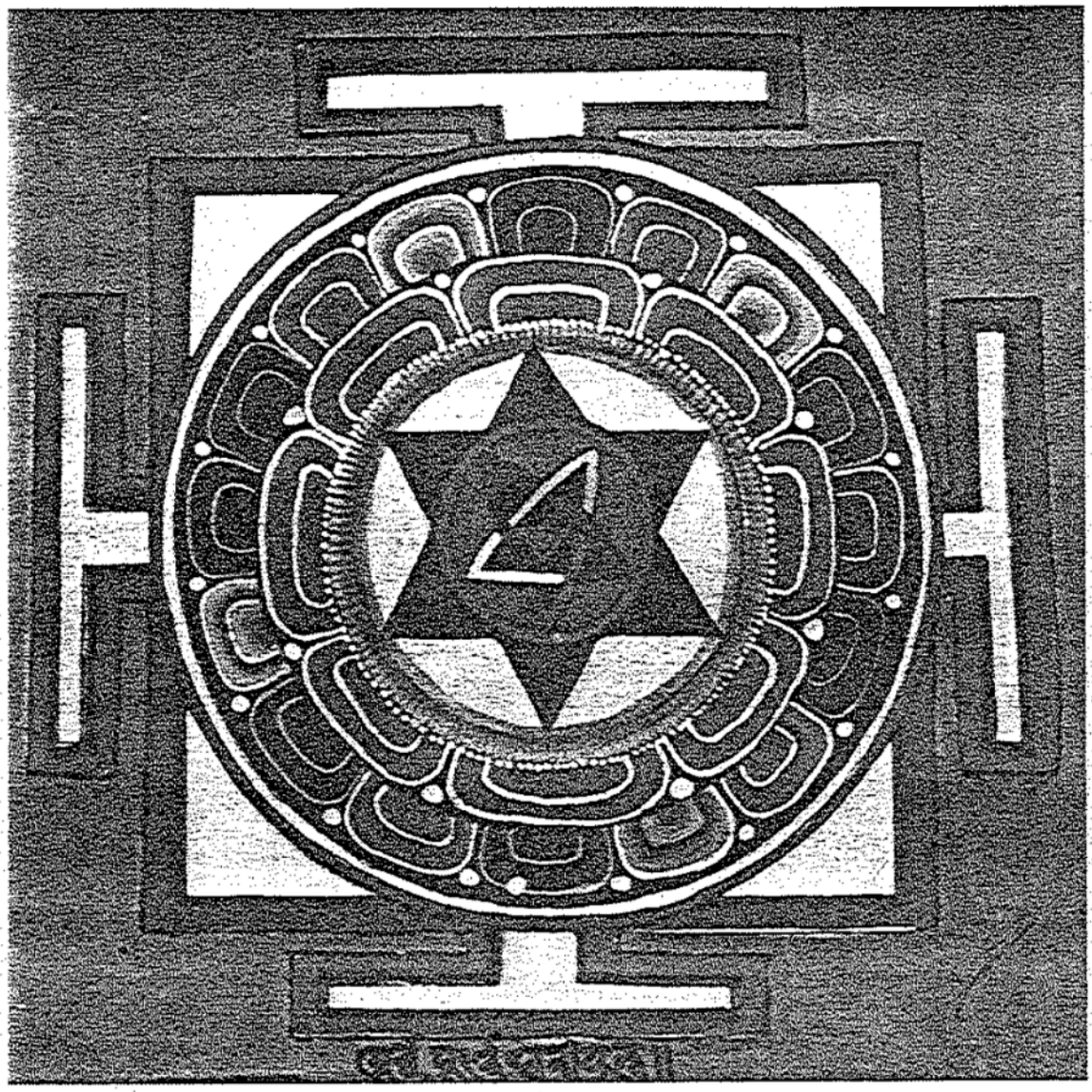
In archaic societies man viewed himself as a part of nature and nature as part of himself. In possession of this vision of unity he created sacred symbols and used them for transpersonal experiences. Sacred symbols enabled him to see himself as part of a 'sacralized' cosmos, breathing and moving with a life in which all elements of existence were interlinked. For archaic man, the universe was pregnant with qualitative meaning. Modern man, on the other hand, has 'desacralized' the cosmos, developed a fragmented vision of the universe and lost his original unity with nature. The result of this 'quantification' is an alienation from within – a loss of subjective identity and of inner and outer force. Jung has said that man's most vital need is to discover his own reality through the cultivation of a symbolic life: 'Man is in need of a symbolic life. . . . But we have no symbolic life. . . . Have you got a corner somewhere in your houses where you perform the rites as you can see in India?'[18]

Symbols like the yantra are transformers of our psychic energy – such symbols alone allow us to discover a 'missing part of the whole man' that makes life joyful, radiant and infinitely meaningful.

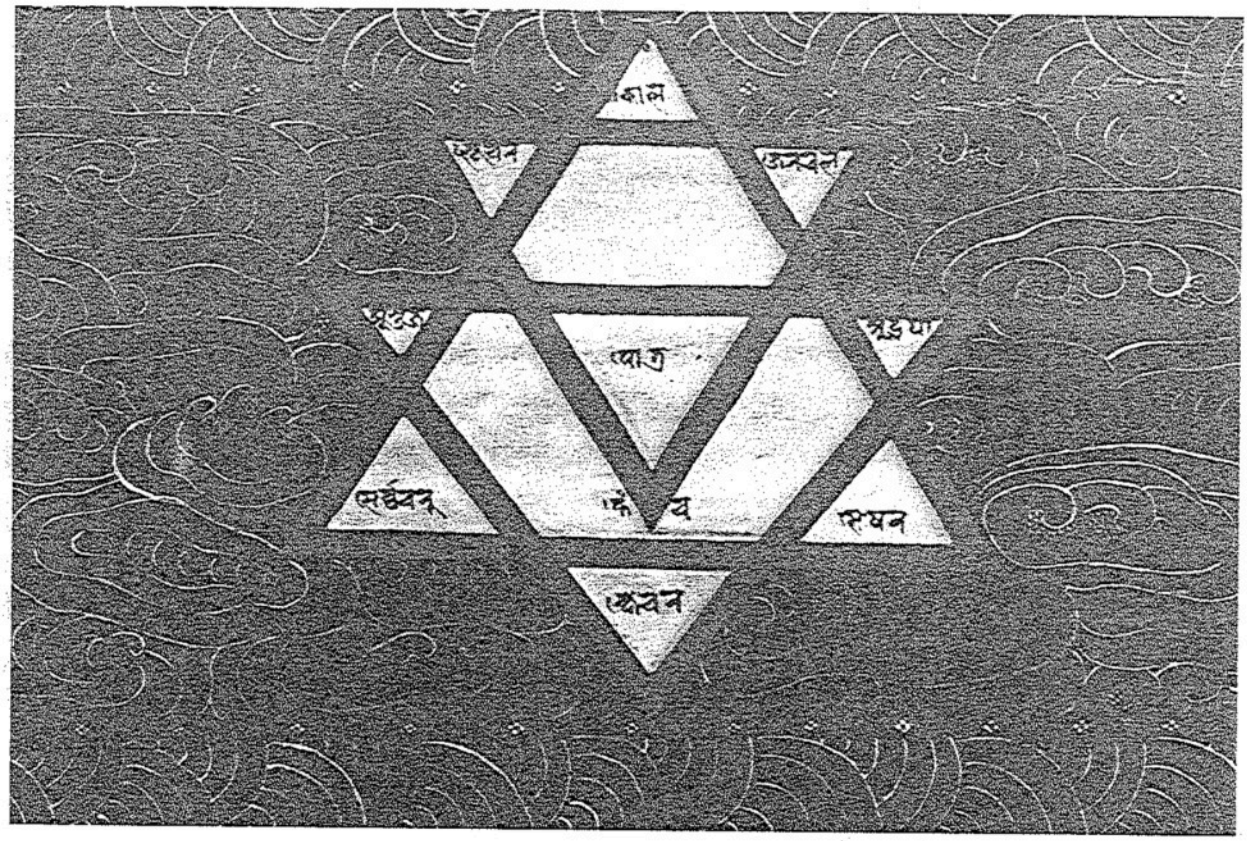
9 'As body is to the soul . . . a yantra is to deity.' Yantras are the sacred enclosures of divinities and indeed are inseparable from them. At the top is the yantra of the goddess Bhuvaneśvarī, who rules the three spheres of the earth, atmosphere and the heavens as space; below left, the Viśvayoni Chakra with icons of Śiva-Śakti, the male and female principles, over a triangle representing the cosmic womb (viśvayoni). Below right, Śiva appears as white point (bindu) and Śakti as red point within the primal triangle, symbolizing the unity of male and female principles. Nepal, c. 1761. Gouache on paper







10, 11 Yantras as images of the cosmos in pristine wholeness. The various geometrical configurations of which they are composed include T-shaped portals, squares, lotus petals, circles and triangles – but all are centred on the mystic point, the bindu. The yantra of the goddess Pūrneśvarī, above, is an archetypal image of the deity who embodies the balance of cosmic forces maintained by the primordial centre. Nepal, *c.* 1761. Gouache on paper



12 The Nava-yoni Chakra floating in the cosmic waters, signifying the creation of the universe by the union of the male and female principles, represented by interpenetrating upward and downward pointing triangles. The nine inscribed triangles indicate the nine (nava) cosmic wombs (yoni). Nepal, c. 1761. Gouache on paper

2

Archetypal Space and Sacred Sound

In every civilization there are consecrated sites and sacred places that are heavy with spiritual significance. Temples, caves, sanctuaries, or features such as rocks serve as vital points of contact and centres of accumulated energy. Such places, once consecrated according to traditional canon, acquire sanctity, and their 'enclosures' separate the archetypal sacred space from its surroundings. The two areas, the world within the enclosure and the world without, also stand for the psychological separation of man from his habitual concerns. The wall or fence or 'magic circle' – whatever form the enclosure takes – stands between the visible and the invisible and recalls the ritual separation of two distinct realities; the one that is sacred in which the divinity manifests itself and the other that is profane, the realm of mundane existence.

Once consecrated, even an insignificant stone will acquire uniqueness and spiritual significance. In India, one often comes across such objects where a sacred enclosure is marked: a simple stone daubed with vermilion is laid under a tree, or a sacred syllable or the name of a deity may be scribbled on the wall. Such images 'speak', 'move' and 'breathe' with life since they impart in a mysterious way a sense of primal reality. To a seeker who searches for meaning in such sites or images, the past participates in the present in that they preserve countless archetypal associations. Such a response necessarily puts out of balance all the notions of linear time of modern man, for whom the past is merely a dead sequence of events. The archetypal images, therefore, call for a new way of seeing through the sharpening of the innate faculties by which they were originally preserved. All such images, whether large or small, abstract or figurative, simple or sophisticated, re-create a celestial prototype and recapitulate the symbolism of the centre where the divine manifests itself, thus investing them with a spiritual value which is held to be ultimately real. The yantra enclosures follow a similar principle and accord with ancient intuitions.

In the *Yajur Veda* (23, 60–61), a passage describing a conversation between a devotee and the priest who performs the fire oblation summarizes this concept. The seeker questions:

> Who knows this world's central point? Who knows the heavens, the earth, the wide air between them?
>
> Who knows the birthplace of the mighty Sūrya [sun]?
>
> I ask thee of the earth's extremest limit, where is the centre of the world, I ask thee?

He is answered by the priest:

> I know the centre of the world about us. I know heaven, earth, and wide air between them.
>
> I know the birthplace of the mighty Sūrya . . .
>
> This altar is the earth's extremest limit; this sacrifice of ours is the world's centre.

Thus, although made of fragments of brick and mortar, the plinth of the fire altar is transformed into a cosmic entity and a spiritual centre, and the altar begins to exist in mystical 'time' and 'space' quite distinct from the profane. In the same way, the archetypal space of the yantra becomes a sacred entity recognized by the sādhaka (aspirant).

In our ordinary perceptions we view space as an amorphous entity which is related to us in units of measurement. For us space is essentially quantitative; we understand it in terms of dimension, volume and distance. For the adept who uses yantras in yogic meditation, on the other hand, space enclosed within the bounded figure is purely qualitative; space is absolute void and unity is a 'sacrament' by means of which he communicates with a force that stands for life itself.

The yantra is an archetypal unit, and in the making of every new yantra the archetypal activity and the divine revelations repeat themselves. Each yantra's consecrated place acts as a dwelling for the gods, a space where movement from the level of profane existence to the level of profound realities is made possible. Symbol and meaning blend so closely that they are one reality, indistinguishable from one another. The yantra of the goddess Kālī, for instance, is not merely her symbol but an indispensable complement of Kālī herself, her total substance experienced through meditation on the 'metaphysical' spaces of her yantra. We not only perceive the yantra being 'of Kālī', but 'understand' it as being one with the spirit of the goddess. It is said, therefore, that the wise 'know no difference between the goddess [Maheśi] and the yantra'.[1]

Every yantra creates a power-field, a cosmicized circuit (kshetra) in which the powers of the sacred are invoked. The lines and planes localized within the yantra, though distinct from all the spaces that surround its outer circuit, are an expression of a transcendental reality. Stretching from star to star the ultimate substratum of all forms is space. Empty space is in itself a primordial substance and shares in the nature of divinity. Without it, the primordial substance whose abode is the whole universe would remain without support. Absolute void is defined by Indian philosophers as a limitless sea of undifferentiated continuum which is an ever-present entity not detachable from the relative, thus making all division of space illusory. So the spaces within a yantra, however minute, can be symbolically brought to 'presence' and expressed as being as immense as the spaces within the solar system. Although in the abstract this is the immutable principle on which the space concept of yantras functions, on the level of human experience we are led to locate the sacred by creating spatial divisions. The act of bounding the figure, 'fencing' its four quarters, defining its spatial orientations, delimiting the sacred territory of the yantra, is an act of asserting where sacred space begins to manifest.

Grammar of archetypal space: from the centre to the periphery

The optical focus of the yantra is always its centre. As the point of intersection, the centre is a supremely creative nucleus from which the etheric force-lines (setu) radiate outwards in concentric circuits and dissolve in the outer circumference (nemi). The nucleus of the yantra is the place of the epiphany of the divine (pīṭha-sthāna). Its central cosmic zone is the inner focus of all the outwardly directed circuits and lines.

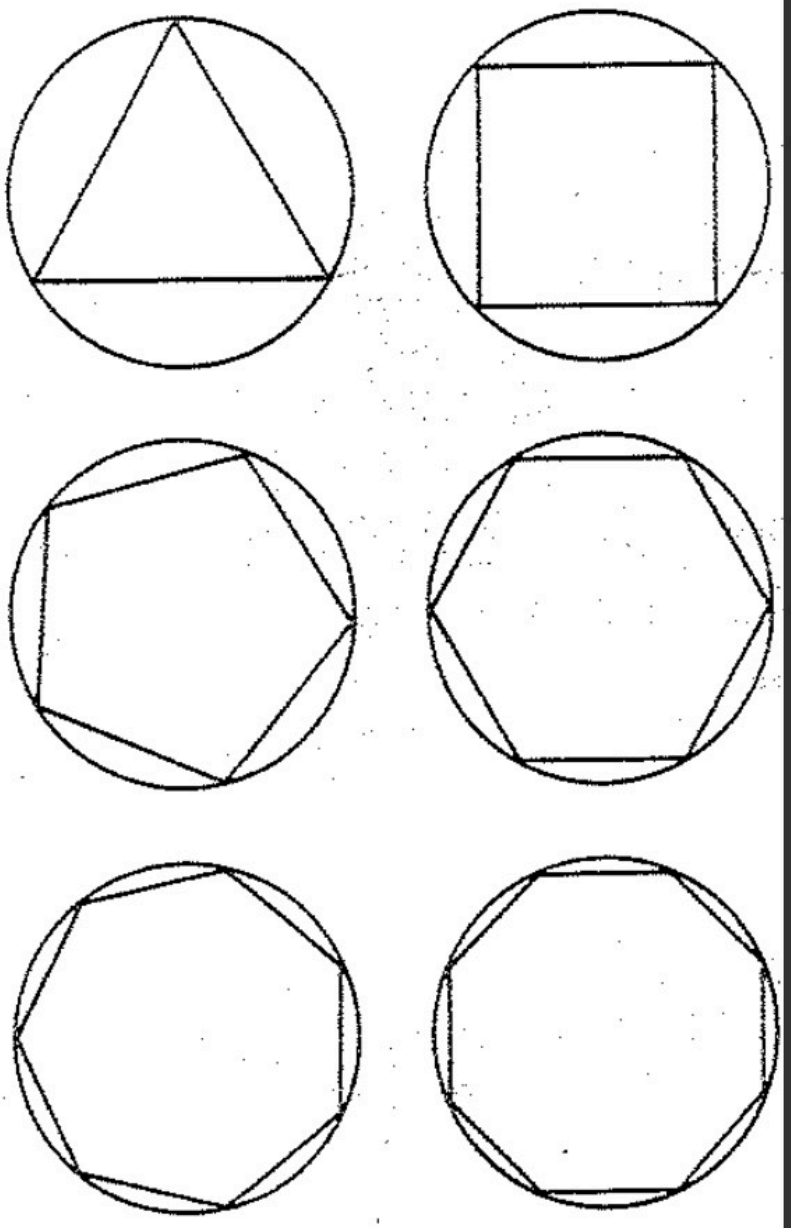
In the sacred centre an epiphany may be represented in anthropomorphic form or as an emblem; or the spot may be marked by the mantric seed-syllables of the deity, such as Oṃ, Hṛīṃ, Śṛīṃ, Kṛīṃ. In some instances, especially in the important yantras such as the Śrī Yantra and Kālī Yantra, the mantra or devatā image at the centre is replaced by one of the most abstract of all symbols: the mathematically extensionless dot, the bindu. 1, 3 15 62

In the Tantras the bindu has been given several interpretations. As an ultimate figure beyond which energy cannot be condensed, the bindu is an appropriate symbol of the first principle, the One. Therefore, the bindu is a 'Whole', or 'Full' (pūrṇa), the undifferentiated, all-embracing reservoir of the infinite. With these associations, the bindu symbol is viewed in cosmological terms as the creative matrix of the universe, the 'world-seed' (viśva-bīja), the point of origin and return of cosmogonical processes. Metaphysically, the bindu represents the unity of the static (male, Śiva) and the kinetic (female, Śakti) cosmic principles, which expand to create the infinite universe of matter and spirit.

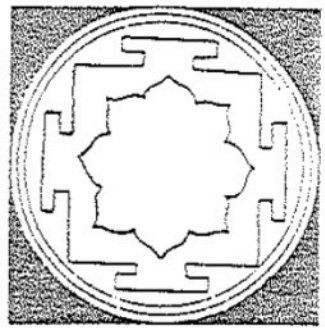
In meditation, as we shall see, the bindu is the region of the absolute where the ultimate union of the aspirant with the divine takes place. The centre of the bindu is the *sanctum sanctorum*, the abode of supra-mundane bliss (sarva-ānandamaya), and the ultimate goal of the sādhanā (worship), Being-Awareness-Bliss (Sat-Cit-Ānanda). Paradoxically, this last metaphysical point of integration with the totality, the absolute void (Śunya), is also the first cause of the universe. The bindu thus symbolically functions in two dimensions, one in time, in existence, as a source and fount of all life, and the other in a sphere beyond all time, in 'timelessness'. Viewed subjectively, from the point of view of the sādhaka, the bindu corresponds to the energy centre of the subtle or psychic body which is visualized as located in the forehead (see p. 120 *ff*). In yantra meditation the central point of the yantra and the abstract centre of the aspirant are brought together by mental concentration.

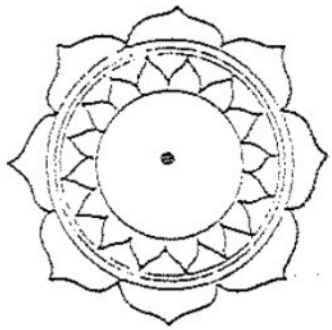
Thus the bindu conveys a variety of concepts. There is a cosmological bindu which functions as the root matrix of creation; the psychological bindu which mirrors the sādhaka's own spiritual centre; the metaphysical bindu which expresses the union of male and female principles; tantrikas have even evolved the concept of the physiological bindu, which is concentrated as human semen.

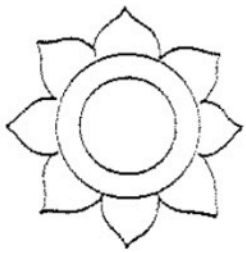
The 'root' forms from which yantras are constructed, the triangle, circle and square, are considered essentially 'primordial' since visually they cannot be reduced further to orderly closed shapes.

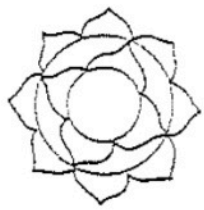


Archetypal shapes based on the division of a circle, alte
equations in the mathematical treatise Ganita Kaumudi
(AD 1356)









Lotuses as symbols of unfolding energies

The rhythm of creation is crystallized in the primal symbol of cosmic location, the triangle. The primary sign of sacred enclosure, since space cannot be bounded by fewer than three lines, the triangle is thus conceived as the first symbolic form to emerge from the cataclysmic chaos preceding creation. In this aspect it is known as the root matrix of nature (mūla-trikoṇa: mūla = root, trikoṇa = triangle). The inverted triangle is also the symbol of creative-genetrix feminine power (Śakti), whose kinetic dynamism gives impetus to the inert force in existence. It is the female emblem (yoni-maṇḍala) of the śakti-principle. With these two associations, the inverted triangle is the first enclosure surrounding the infinitesimal nucleus of most yantras devoted to goddesses, and is the emblem of the great goddess Kālī. The triangle with apex upwards denotes the male principle (Purusha) and is the emblem of Śiva. Its numerical equivalent is 3.

Whereas the bindu is the gathering-up of forces, the circle represents the cyclical forces, the contraction and expansion of astronomical revolutions, and the round of cosmic rhythms. Within this image lies the notion that time has no beginning and no end. The farthest region of space and the innermost nucleus of an atomic structure are bound by the constant flow of life and the rhythmic energy of creation. The circle may also be considered, in its concentrated form, as a bindu, or in galactic proportions as the expanding universe; its numerical counterpart is the zero.[2]

These three fundamental shapes, the point, triangle and circle, appear in intricate combinations and permutations, and may be related in several ways. Most frequent are the diagrams formed by interpenetration of two triangles to form a star-hexagon: the upward pointing 'male' and the downward pointing 'female' generate the concept of the fusion of polarities, the male and female, spirit and matter, the static and the kinetic in a perfect state of unity. The numerical equivalent of this figure is 6. Similarly, the aṣtakoṇa (a figure with eight angles) results from the superimposition of square on square; its allusion is to the number 8, a sign of infinity and associated with the eight directions of space and the endless cycle of time. The star-pentagon illustrates the total organization of space into the numerical order of 5. The symbolic references of this figure are to the creative and destructive power of Śiva in his fivefold aspect (as one of the chief divinities of the Hindu trinity, Śiva has been represented in innumerable forms; in his fivefold aspect his epithets include: Conqueror of Death, Mṛityunjaya; an embodiment of knowledge, Dakshiṇa-mūrti; Lord of Lust, Kāmeṣvara; the Being of Life, Prāṇamaya-mūrti,; the Lord of the Elements, Bhūtesha).

The lotus blossom is one of the principle archetypal symbols used in yantras. Generally centred on the axis with its geometrically abstract petals pointing towards the circumference, it is the appropriate image to illustrate the unfolding of power or the divine essence.

In ancient Indian cosmology, the lotus was associated with creation myths, and is a type of physical prop to the universe. It is, for example, often depicted as springing from Vishṇu's navel, supporting and giving birth to Brahmā, the first god of the Indian trinity. From its pericarp the rest of the created world issues. Since the earliest times, the lotus has always been a symbol of the citadel of the heart, the seat of the

Self. Yogis believe that there are actual spiritual centres within us whose essential nature and luminosity can be experienced during meditation; these spiritual centres are often represented symbolically as lotuses. The *Chāndogya Upanishad* (VIII, I, 1–3) states:

> Within the city of Brahman, which is the body, there is the heart, and within the heart there is a little house. This house has a shape of a lotus, and within it dwells that which is to be sought after, inquired about, and realized.
>
> What, then, is that which dwells within this house, this lotus of the heart? . . .
>
> Even so large as the universe outside is the universe within the lotus of the heart. Within it are heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the lightning and all the stars. Whatever is in macrocosm is in this microcosm . . .
>
> Though old age comes to the body, the lotus of the heart does not grow old. It does not die with the death of the body. The lotus of the heart, where Brahman resides with all his glory – that, and not the body, is the true city of Brahman.

Thus the true city of the Supreme Principle is the heart, or central core of the individual, symbolized by the lotus which remains untouched by the banal reality of every-day living; from the tantric point of view, the lotus is the pure Self revealed in meditation, the spiritual state in its fullness.

Because of its associations with progression, development and the life-expanding quality of prāṇa (breath, or the vital force of nature), the lotus represents the 'out-petalling' of the soul-flower in the process of spiritual realization. The aspirant's lotus-field (padma-kshetra) is formed of the energy-centres of his subtle body, and their 'opening-up' implies the state of complete repose when the purpose of yogic meditation is attained.

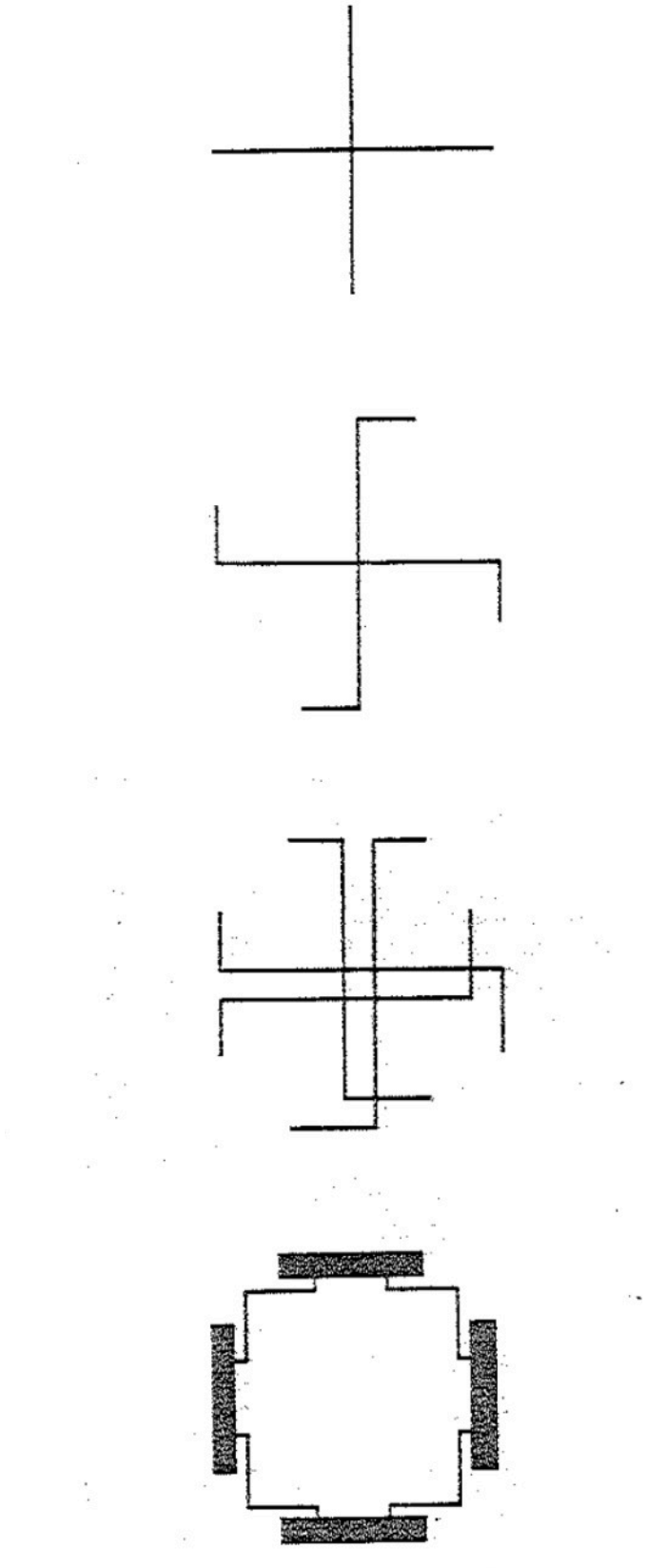
The square is the fundamental format of most yantras. It is the substratum, the receptacle and base of the manifest world. The square denotes the terrestrial world which must be transcended. Its prosaic regularity is contained by the compass points of the four cardinal directions, and its numerical equivalent is 4.

Four is a symbol of the world extended into four directions, uniting in its horizontal and vertical directions pairs of opposites, and representing the totality of space. The square is the form of order and perfection, the 'support' of the yantra figure.

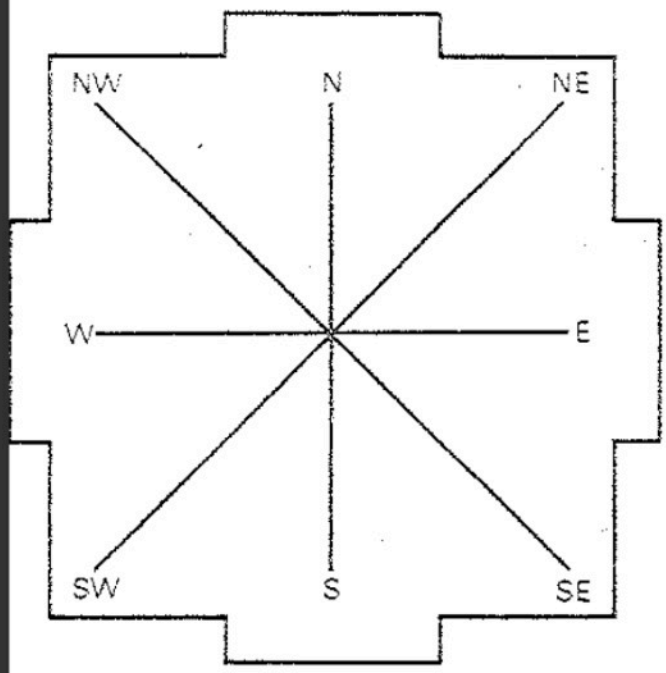
Each of these figures – circle, square, triangle, lotus – may function as a complete yantra or be combined with several linear circuits. Each primal symbol has a range of meanings, according to its context and the plane of consciousness on which it functions.

At the periphery of the figure are four T-shaped portals, placed at the four cardinal directions and known as cosmic doors because it is through them that the aspirant symbolically enters the cosmic force-field. Pointers directing towards the interior of a yantra, the portals are an initiatory threshold which simultaneously opposes the phenomenal and embraces the noumenal.

The portals, with their extended gates, are the earthly plane of existence (bhūgraha) or the region of materiality, and signify the lowest point of the ascent towards perfection. In effect, they represent the earthly passage between the external and 'material' and the internal, sacred space of the yantra. The frontiers



The cross extended into a double swastika, indicating that the Supreme Principle can be reached by both 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' paths. In the fully formed square enclosure of the yantra the gates open out at all four sides and are invitations towards the sacred centre



The eight compass points locating the divinities of the eight regents of space who guard and protect the microcosmic universe of the yantra

Śrīṃ, seed mantra of the goddess Lakshmī, the Śakti of plenitude and fortune

*For note on Sanskrit pronunciation, see p. 170.

which are related to the directions and determinants of space have their own complex iconographic deities who forbid negative forces to enter. The deities of the spheres, Lokapālas, who preside over the T-shaped portals and square enclosure of the yantra, may be four, eight or ten in number, corresponding to the four regents of space, the intermediary directions, the nadir and the zenith. In yantras devoted to goddesses, a group of auxiliary Śaktis or the eight Bhairavas (epithets of Śiva) flank the doors. Where the yantras are completely closed circuits, as in the Sarvatobhadra (square grid) form, each of the outer squares (pada) is presided over by a guardian divinity of one of the four quarters, sometimes represented by emblems, such as the trident, goad, noose, etc. In all types of yantra, however, the basic function of these divinities is the same: to protect the sacred precinct from negative or disintegrating forces.

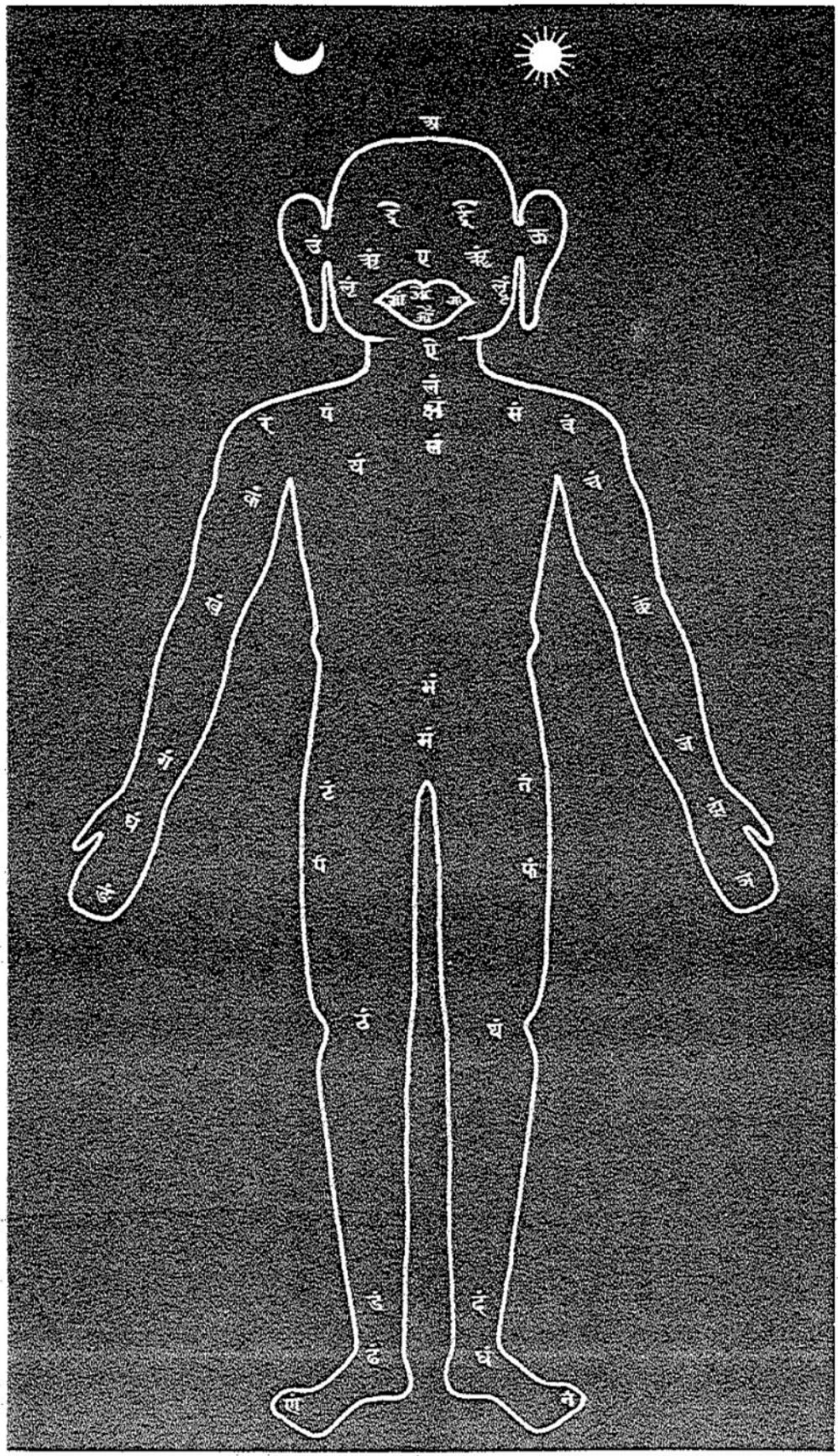
Sacred sound

Inseparable from yantras are the subtle vibrations which help to intensify their power. These sound elements are often represented by letters inscribed on the yantra, and in principle all yantras are associated with mystic combinations of Sanskrit letters.* The inner dynamics of the yantra can never be understood in isolation from the system of sound dynamics, as the two combine to make up the complete 'definition' of the divine. The yantra-mantra complex is basically an equation that unites space (ākāśa), which in its gross form appears as shapes, and vibrations, which in their finite forms occur as the spoken or written word.

Essentially, then, a mystic sound combination composed of Sanskrit letters, a simple mantra consists of 'atomic' monosyllabic sounds such as Krīṃ, Hrīṃ, Śrīṃ, Aiṃ, and more complex mantras are composed of a sequence of such syllables. Almost all yantras have some form of mantra, either simple or complex, inscribed on them. The centre of the yantra is generally inscribed with the most important syllable of the mantra associated with it, while other mantric letters are arranged in the spaces formed by the intersection of lines, either around the circle or on the lotus petals or on the outer square band (bhūpura) of the yantra. Certain important yantras may contain all the vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet in their spaces, whereas others will be inscribed with whole mantric verses associated with the particular devatā (tutelar deity) the yantra represents.

The infinite diversity of the universe as represented by the deities is manifest most explicitly in the iconographic image, more abstractly as the yantra and most subtly by the mantra. The mantra projects through vibrations the subtle anatomy either of the devatā (from which it is inseparable) or of the forces of the universe. The mantric energy condensed in the letters is seen as vested with a spiritual power beyond human comprehension. Pronounced correctly, joined, and with the correct rhythm, accent, intonation and mental attitude, a mantra becomes the 'soul of the yantra' (*Kulārṇava Tantra*), and a vitalizing force within the mind of the seeker.

A common mistake is to view mantras in conceptual terms, splitting hairs over the meaning of the vocables. Mantras are not to be regarded as parts of speech, or



The Sanskrit alphabet, symbol of cosmic sound, related to the parts of the subtle body and energized in a ritual known as Aṅga-nyāsa. After the Sanskrit work Tārārahasya (V. 138–40).

Hrīṃ, seed mantra of the goddess Tripurā-Sundarī, denoting the unity of the male and female principles. It is also the primal vibration of the goddess Bhuvaneśvarī who presides over the three spheres

Krīṃ, seed mantra of the goddess Kālī, representing her power of creation and dissolution

Like yantras, mantras can be categorized according to classes and purposes, and in principle are matched to particular yantras. Mantras which induce a trance-state, for instance, are associated with yantras which are used for enlightenment; protective mantras are paired with yantras which are defences against malignant powers, and so on. So intimate is this relationship that mantra and yantra are parallel to each other and in some cases may be interchangeable. A letter may assume the form of a diagram and manifest as a 'static' mantra-yantra; conversely, the yantra may be aroused into vibrating rhythm and function as a mantra.

When a particular letter functions as a yantra it is given an abstract geometrical figuration. A characteristic graphic representation of the sacred monosyllable Oṃ in its yantra form appears in the Orissan manuscript *Sayantra Sūnya-Saṁhitā*, where it is split into five constituent parts, starting from the bindu and proceeding to curves having an element of the spiral. These five graphic forms correspond to the complete unfolding of the basic principles of the universe in its fivefold aspects, such as the five elements, five subtle essences (tanmātras), five deities, five seed mantras, etc.

In addition to the seed mantras, there are a number of complex mantras composed of several seed-syllables. Their number, mode and purpose, with their yantras, are mentioned in several tantric texts.

The structure of certain mantras is based on the esoteric symbolism of numbers. The mantra devoted to Śiva, for instance, is composed of five letters (pañcākshara) - Na/maḥ Śi/vā/ya. In religious practice and mythology Śiva combines in himself five aspects of the universe. His eternal energy is conceived of as evident in five

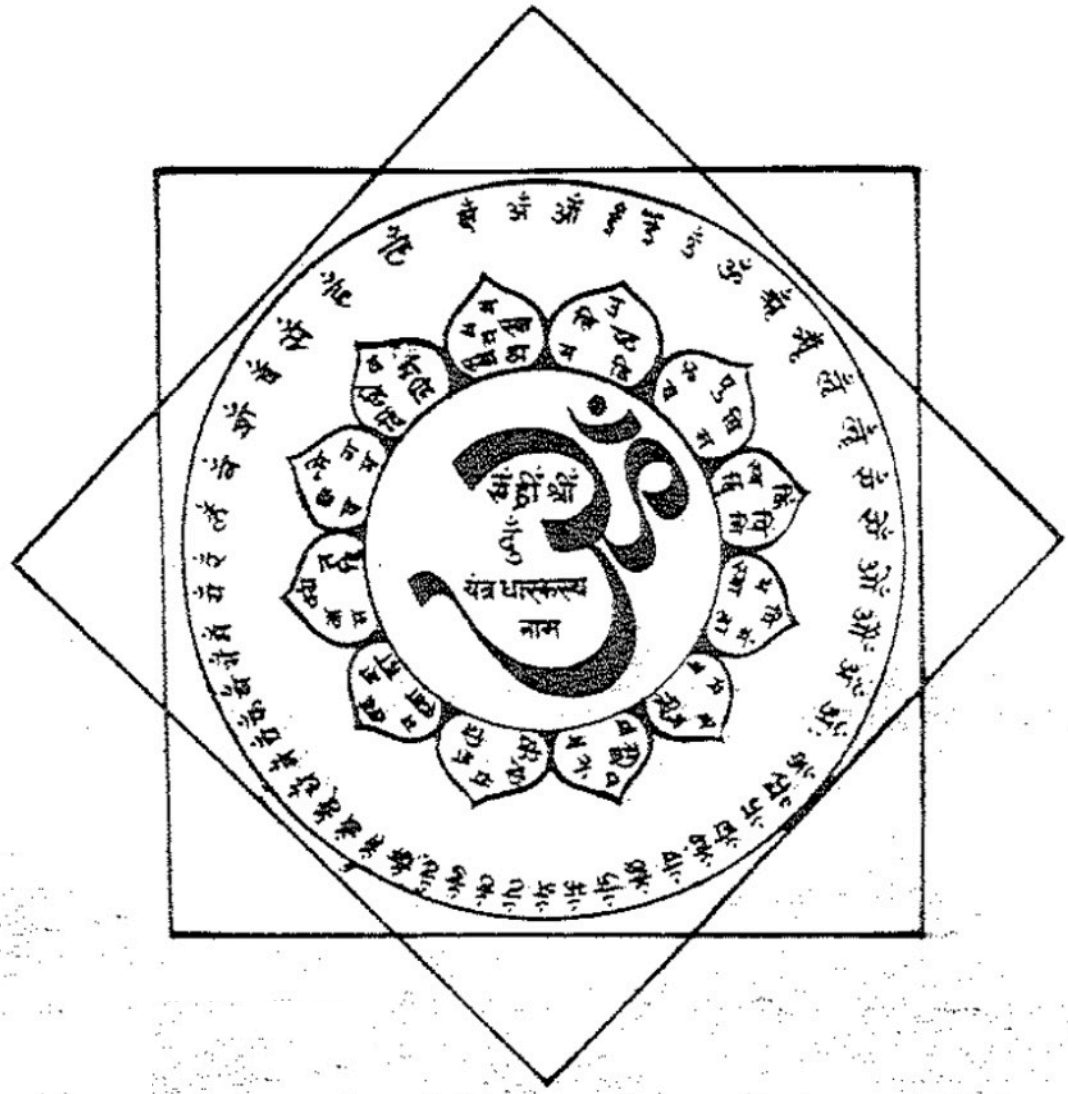
Devatā	*Seed mantra*	*Element*	*Subtle element*	*Vital air in the subtle body*
Sudarśana	Pliṃ	ether	sound	Udāna
Siṁhāsana	Dhliṃ	air	touch	Vyāna
Jagannātha	Kliṃ	fire	sight	Samāna
Subhadrā	Sliṃ	water	taste	Apāna
Balbhadra	Hliṃ	earth	smell	Prāṇa

Oṃkāra Yantra, a graphic representation of the primordial seed sound Oṃ, symbolizing the whole cosmos. The letter Oṃ is split up into five shapes to represent the entire universe, resolved into five cosmic principles. After the Orissan palm-leaf Ms. Sayantra Sūnya-Saṁhitā

activities: he enfolds the whole of creation, and in this aspect is known as Sadyojatā: he preserves it as Vāmadeva; he reabsorbs or dissolves it as Aghora; he veils or conceals the world of phenomena in his Tatpurusha aspect; finally, as Iśāna, he grants boons and bestows on his devotees grace which leads towards final liberation. These five aspects are correlated with important and fundamental sets of five psycho-cosmic principles such as the five elements, the five senses and five quarters (the four regents of space + zenith). This is one of the reasons why the pentagon is associated with Śiva (see p. 32 above). The five syllables of the Śiva mantra are an attempt to illustrate his immanence in his five aspects, and when his mantra is inscribed in the yantra, it symbolically recapitulates the fivefold Śaivite tenets. Similarly, the mantra devoted to the second god of the Hindu trinity, Vishṇu, has twelve syllables – Oṃ/ Na/mo Bha/ga/va/te/ Vā/su/de/vā/ya; as does that of the sun god Sūrya, associated with the twelve zodiacal signs.

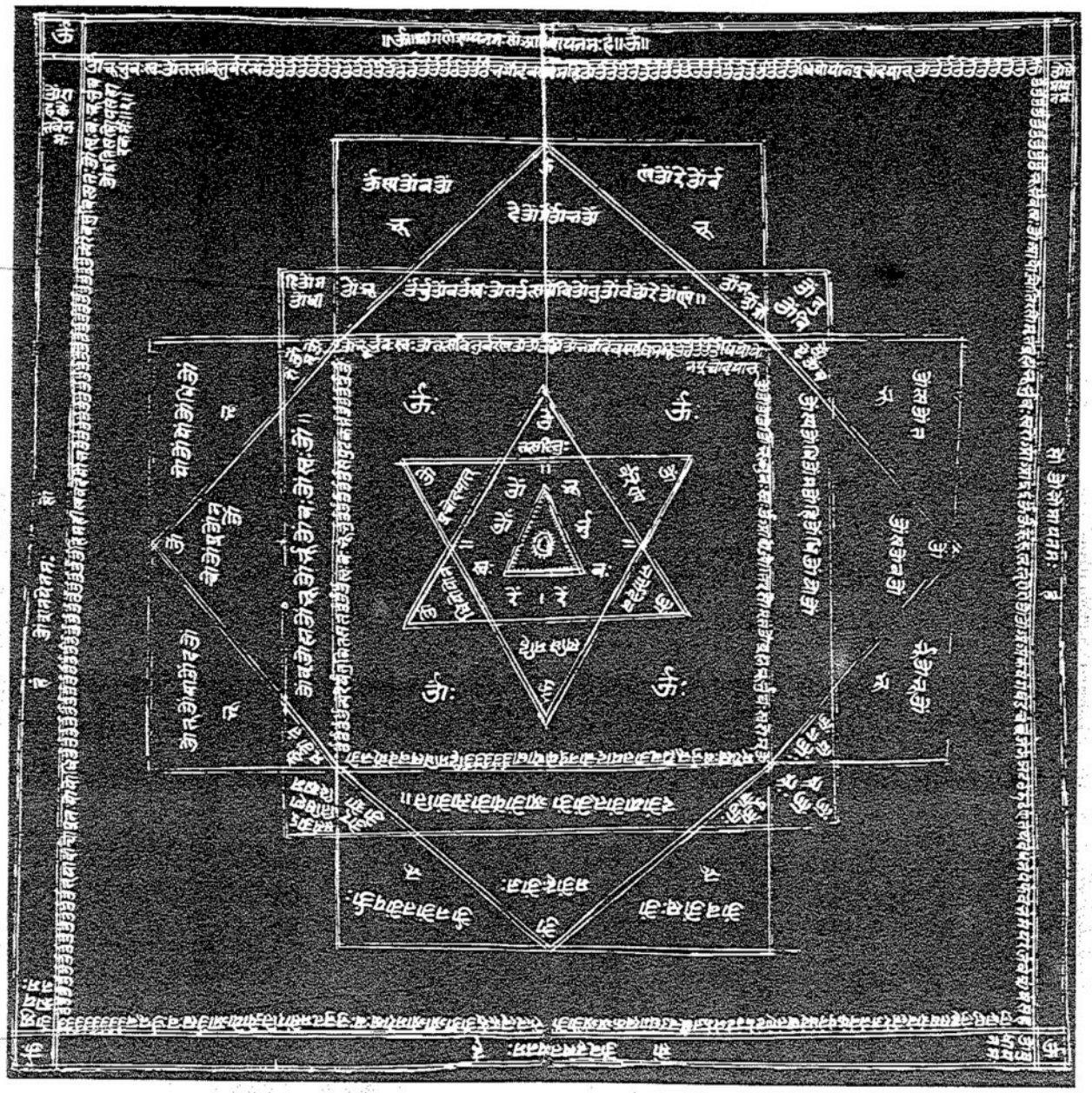
The Gāyatrī Mantra

One of the most important longer mantras, commanding great respect since Vedic times, is the Gāyatrī Mantra. This reads: Oṃ bhur bhuvah swaḥ tat savitur vareṇyam, bhargo, devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt, Oṃ – 'May we meditate on the effulgent Light [or Power] of he who is worshipful and who has given birth to all worlds. May he direct the rays of our intelligence towards the path of good.'[8] The tantric version of the Gāyatrī Mantra in the *Śrīvidyārṇava Tantra*,[9] given in


ॐ
यंत्र धारकस्य
नाम

the table below, illustrates how each of the syllables of the expanded mantra is linked with a deity, a colour, a bodily mechanism and a cosmic principle. The mantra is inscribed in a circular fashion in the Gāyatrī Yantra, symbolically integrating a whole mantra-picture of the universe with the yantra form.

Mantra syllable	*Colour*	*Śakti (goddess)*	*Cosmic principle (micro-macrocosm)*
Tat	yellow	Prahlādini	earth
Sa/	pink	Pradhā	water
vi/	red	Nityā	fire
tuṛ	blue	Viśvabhadra	air
va/	fiery	Vilāsini	ether
re/	white	Prabhāvati	smell
ni/	white	Jayā	taste
yam	white	Sāntā	sight
Bha/	black	Kāntā	touch
rgo	red	Durgā	sound
De/	red on lotus	Saraswati	speech
va/	white	Viśvamāyā	hands
sya	golden-yellow	Visāleśā	genitals
Dhi/	white	Vyāpini	anus
ma/	pink	Vimalā	feet
hi	conch-white	Tamopahāriṇi	ears
Dhi/	cream	Sūkṣma	mouth
yo	red	Viśvayoni	eyes
Yo	red	Jayāvahā	tongue
Naḥ/	colour of the rising sun	Padmālayā	nose
Pra/	colour of blue lotus	Parā	mind (manas)
co/	yellow	Sobha	ego-sense (ahaṃkāra)
da/	white	Bhadrarūpā	The first causal principle of the world (mahat)
yāt	white, red, black	Trimurti	Three qualities of material nature: sattva, rajas, tamas (i.e. radiance, activity, inertia)



The Gāyatrī Yantra inscribed with the Gāyatrī Mantra. Rajasthan, c. 19th century. Ink and colour on paper

Chakras of the subtle body	*Deity*	*Srī Vidyā Mantra*		*Yoginīs presiding over the subtle body*
Sahasrāra			*Hrīṃ*	Yākinī
	Bhūmī		*la*	
	Vishṇu		*ka*	
	Bhārtī		*sa*	
Ājña between the eyebrows			*Hrīṃ*	Hākinī
	Bhūmī		*la*	
	Brahmā		*ha*	
Viśuddha throat centre				Dākinī
	Vishṇu		*ka*	
	Bhārtī		*sa*	
	Brahmā		*ha*	
Anāhata level of the heart				Rākinī
	Rudra / Rudraṇī (Śiva) (Śakti)		*Hrīṃ*	
Maṇipūra navel				Lākinī
	Bhūmī		*la*	
	Vishṇu		*ī*	
Svādhishthāna below the navel				Kākinī
	Bhārtī		*e*	
	Brahmā		*ka*	
Mūlādhāra base of spine				Sākinī

Śaktis and their cosmic energies	*Cosmic cycle*
Raudrī = Energy of action Bhagamālinī	Saṁhāra Dissolution
Jyeṣṭha = Energy of knowledge Vajreśvarī	Sthiti Preservation
Vāmā = Energy of will Kāmeśvarī	Sṛiṣṭi Creation

Nava-yoni Chakra. The yantra for Śrī Vidyā worship, composed of interpenetrating triangles to symbolize the imperishable unity of Śiva/Śakti. The 15 seed syllables inscribed around the circle represent all the hierarchies and planes of the cosmos, and illustrate the mutual interrelationship of microcosm and macrocosm. The 15 syllables are divided into three groups. The first has 5 seed vibrations: ka = primordial desire, e = causal womb, ī = substance of generative force, la = Śiva, and Hrīṃ = seed syllable of the goddess Tripurā-Sundarī, invoked in the yantra. The second group consists of 6 seed syllables: ha = Śiva, sa = Prakṛiti, ka = force of nature as primordial desire, ha = Śiva aspect, la = cosmic ether, plus the seed mantra Hrīṃ. The third group consists of 4 syllables: sa, ka, la, Hrīṃ, and represents the unity in duality of the male and female principles. The aspirant may internalize this complex symbolism by concentrating on the esoteric essence of each of the syllables, and so intuit his unity with the cosmos. After the tantric work Varivasyā-Rahasya

The reason the sound vibrations of the Gāyatrī Mantra are divided into twenty-four syllables is probably to correspond with the twenty-four cosmic principles, technically called tattvas, of the traditional Sāṁkhya system of Indian thought (see p. 74). These principles, from the point of view of creation, represent the entire static and kinetic universe; from the point of view of man, they embody the whole psycho-physical and spiritual self.

The Śrī Vidyā Mantra

A highly esoteric mantra is the Śrī Vidyā Mantra which is discussed in the *Varivasyā-Rahasya*, a tantric text devoted to the supreme goddess Tripurā-Sundarī who, in her knowledge aspect, is known as Śrī Vidyā. The cosmic vision of the tantras can be considered either exoteric or esoteric; these two viewpoints give two sides of a single doctrine. The former looks at the exterior, the literal, and is easily comprehensible; when tantric deities are in their exoteric sense, for example, they are comprehended by the senses in their image form. But from the subtle, or esoteric, point of view the deities are expressed in a group of vibrations like the mantra of Śrī Vidyā. Esotericism being more subtle and interior, Śrī Vidyā sādhanā (ritual practice) is confined to 'secret circles' in which the individual teaching is by oral transmission from the preceptor according to the disciple's level of spiritual awareness. The Śrī Vidyā Mantra consists of fifteen seed-vibrations which are partial aspects of the supreme goddess and are believed to hold the force of Enlightenment. This mantra may be worshipped in the Śrī Yantra (see p. 109), or in the Yantra of Nine Triangles (Nava-yoni Chakra, see opposite), in which case the fifteen esoteric syllables are divided into three principal groups and are inscribed in the primal triangle around the bindu. 62 12

It is held by Śrī Vidyā practitioners that one syllable of the fifteen is in the nature of Pure Consciousness (Cit). This secret syllable is generally not recorded in the texts. When uttered by the guru with the correct instruction it can bring about the aspirant's direct comprehension of the highly esoteric properties of the yantra-mantra complex. Like the Gāyatrī Mantra, above, the Śrī Vidyā Mantra has a precise psycho-cosmic symbolism.

The combinations of letters inscribed on the yantras must be logically congruent with the structure of the Sanskrit language. Certain important yantras, such as the Śrī Yantra, have all the Sanskrit vowels and consonants inscribed in their angles or on the lotus petals. According to tantra, the first Sanskrit letter, A, represents Śiva. When the letter A is aspirated and pronounced from deep in the throat, it sounds Ha, the letter symbol of Śakti as well as the last letter of the Sanskrit alphabet. The combination of the two letters A and Ha embraces the entire range of the Sanskrit alphabet and epitomizes the whole of creation in its subtle aspect as sound.

As related to yantras, then, mantras serve two main purposes. They stand for the deity whose mantra is inscribed on the yantra, and they are used extensively during worship and meditation with yantras, chanted and intoned during ritual (see pp.

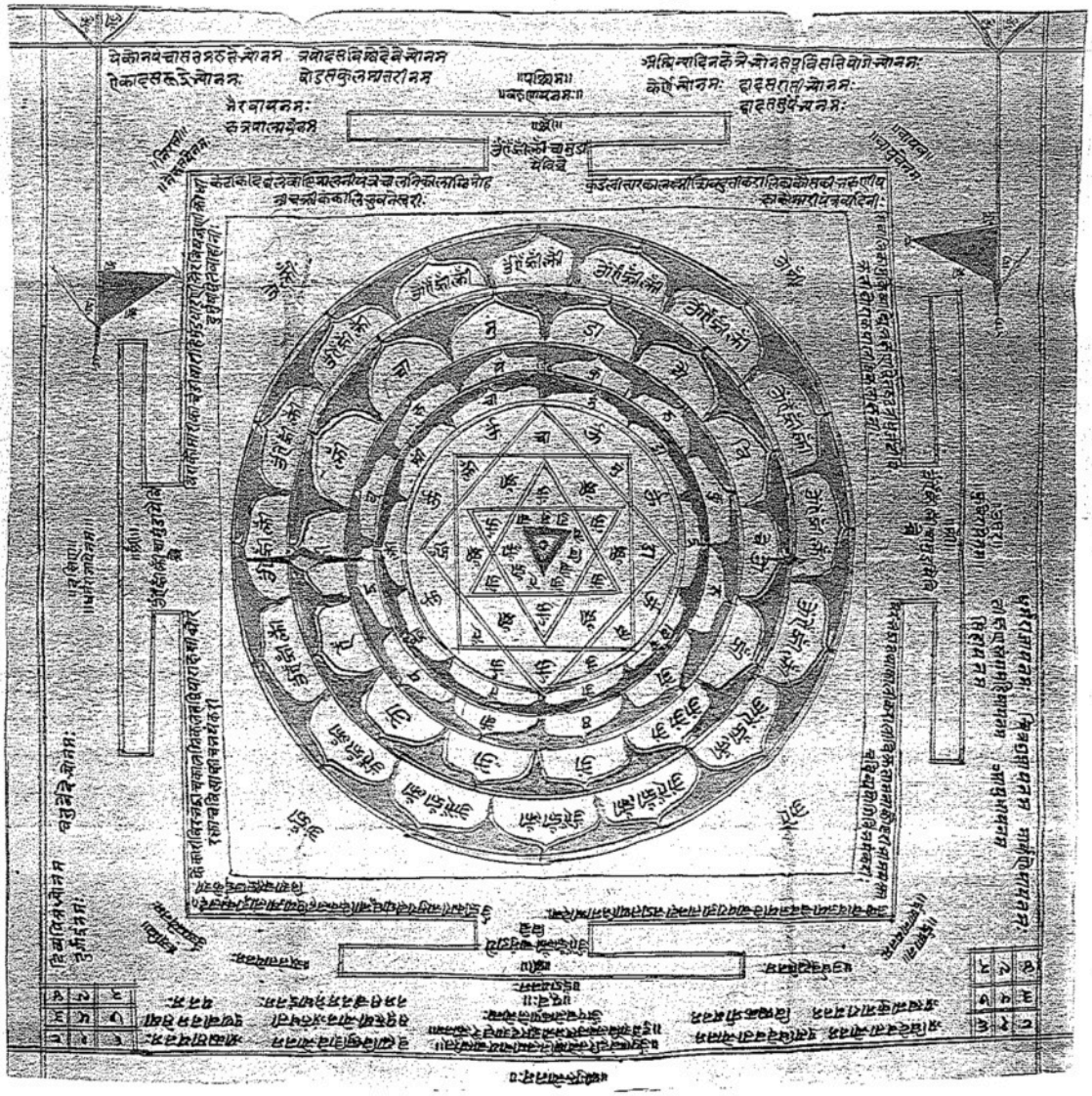
102–5). Ritual mantras may take the form of complete verses, repeated combinations of the seed syllables (japa) or single letters which serve in some cases as 'reminders' of ideas of the qualities either of the deities or of the universe.

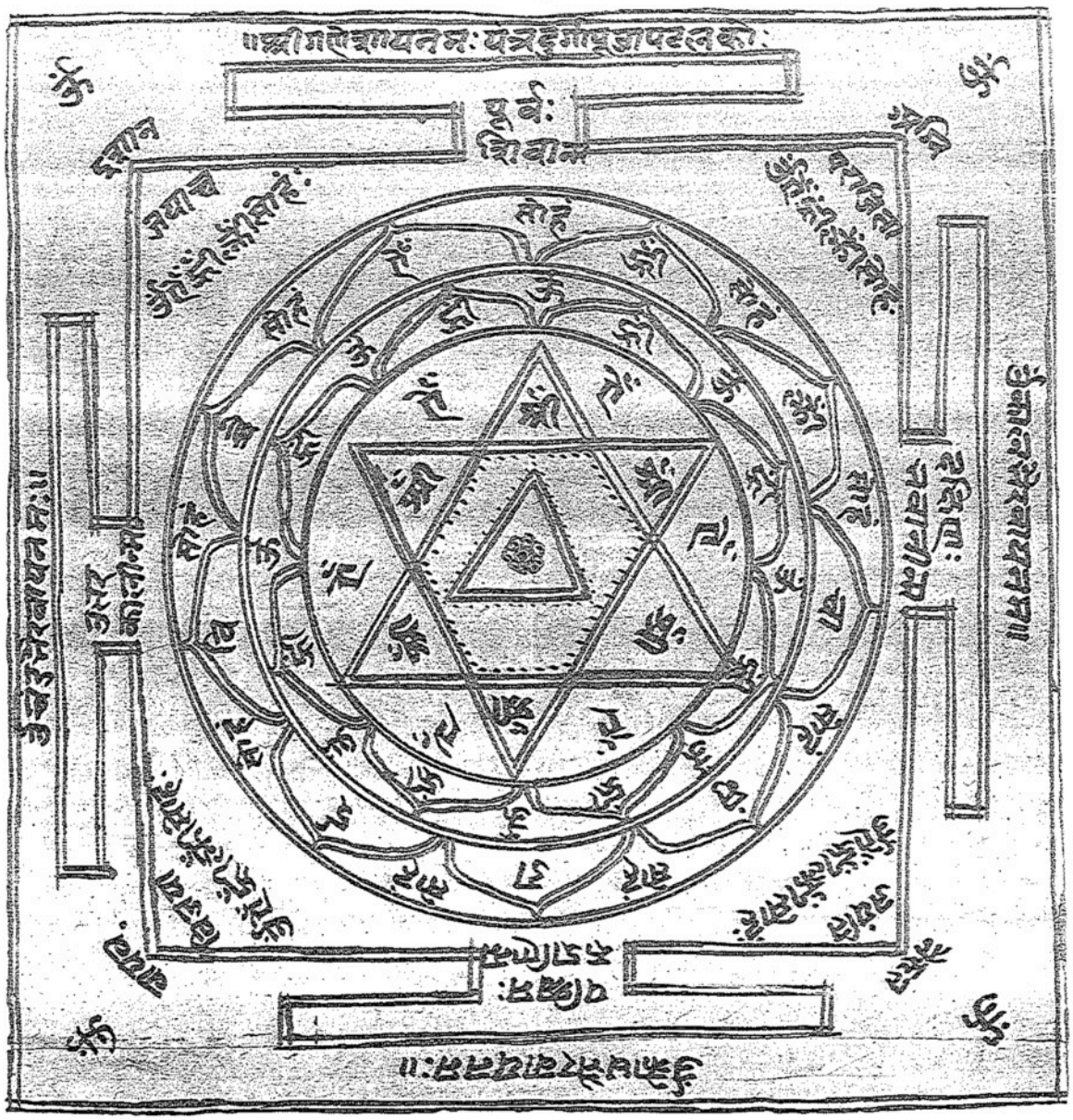
Finally, the mantra and the yantra form a complex dialectic of form and sound. Although the yantra and the mantra are two distinct principles and operate on two distinct levels, they are mutually influential and complementary: every yantra can be reduced to certain frequencies of vibration (mantra) and every sequence of vibrations can be grouped into particles of matter to form an appropriate geometrical shape (yantra). The yantra and the mantra are meant to substitute for each other and operate on a principle of modern science similar to the conservation of energy into matter and matter into energy. A yantra in its 'root' vibration may be considered as a seed mantra of the divinity and allowed to exist only in the mind as a thought-force, or the nucleus of the seed mantra may be exteriorized, expanded and
65 localized as harmonic lines. In other words, it is possible to 'see' sound as form and 'hear' pattern as sound.

Recent research in cymatics (the study of the interrelationship of wave-forms and matter) has shown remarkable results: 'The Hindu sacred syllable Oṃ, when correctly uttered into the tonoscope, apparently produces the circle 'O', which is then filled in with concentric squares and triangles, finally producing, when the last traces of the 'm' have died away, a "yantra".'[10] Such complex energy transformations lend support to the conclusion that yantra and mantra, in the ultimate sense, are one and the same.

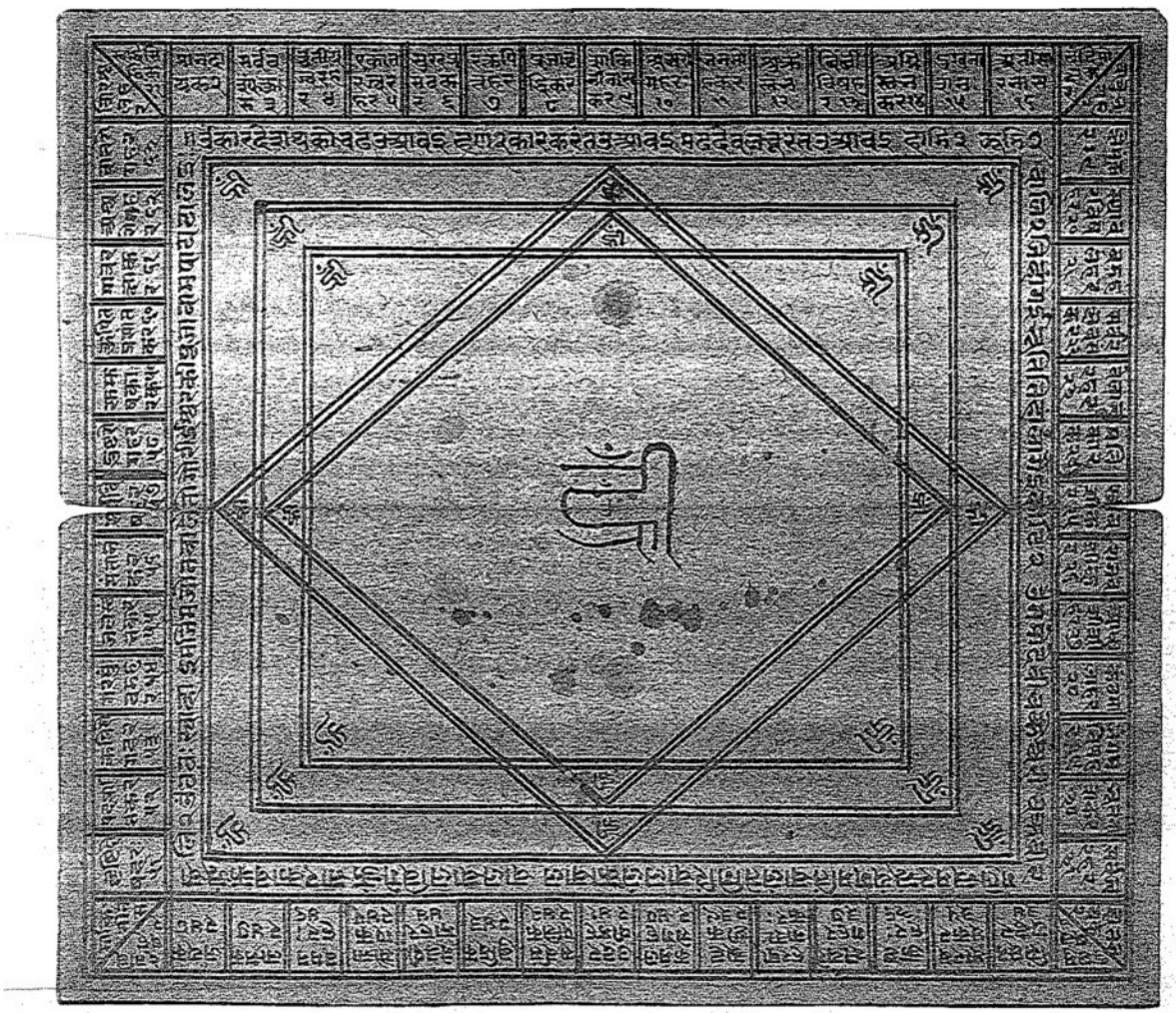
Yantra and mantra thus present the union of archetypal space and sacred sound. Both are aids to inward illumination which tap the senses of sight and sound in order to transcend the phenomenal. Each is inseparable from the other, with mantra the 'soul' and yantra the 'body' of subtle sound.

13 Yantra of the goddess Chāmuṇḍā (a form of the great goddess Kālī) inscribed with sacred syllables or mantras. Here the seed mantras Oṃ, Hrīṃ and Klīṃ are related to each part of the yantra, intensifying the diagram's energy and vitalizing its static shapes when they are meditated upon or chanted during worship. Rajasthan, 19th century. Ink and colour on paper

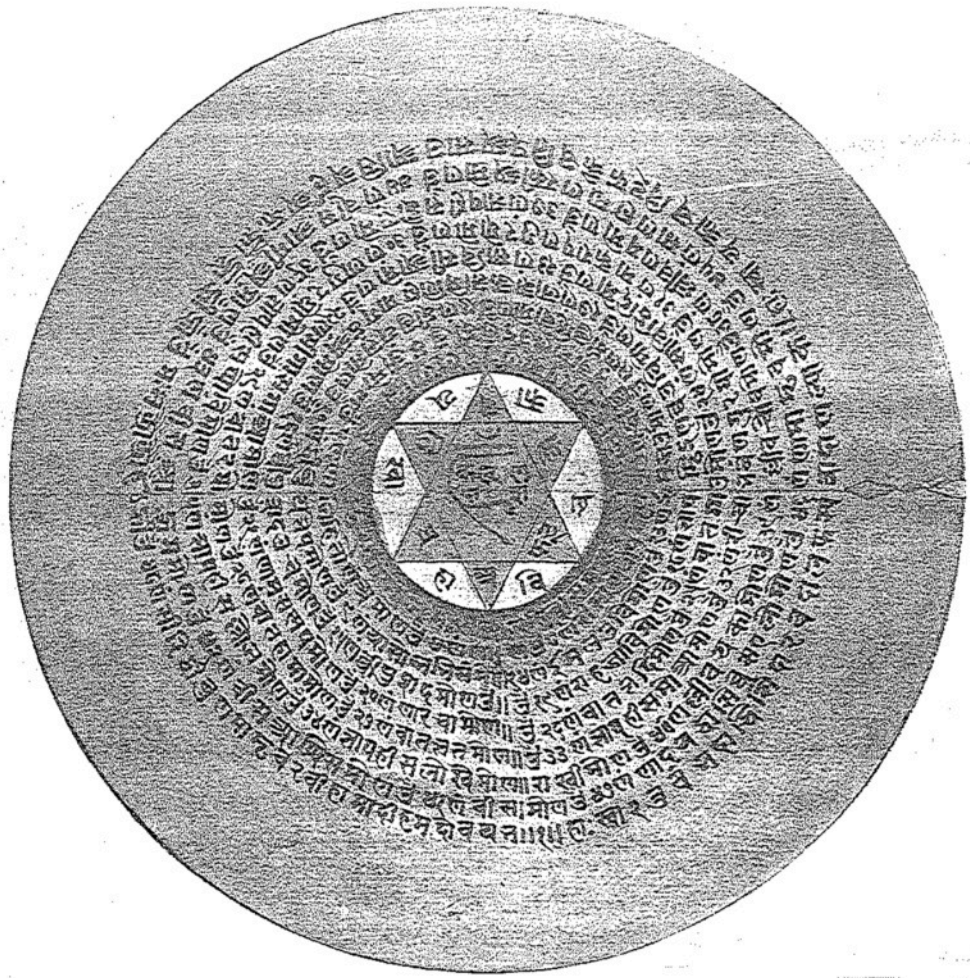




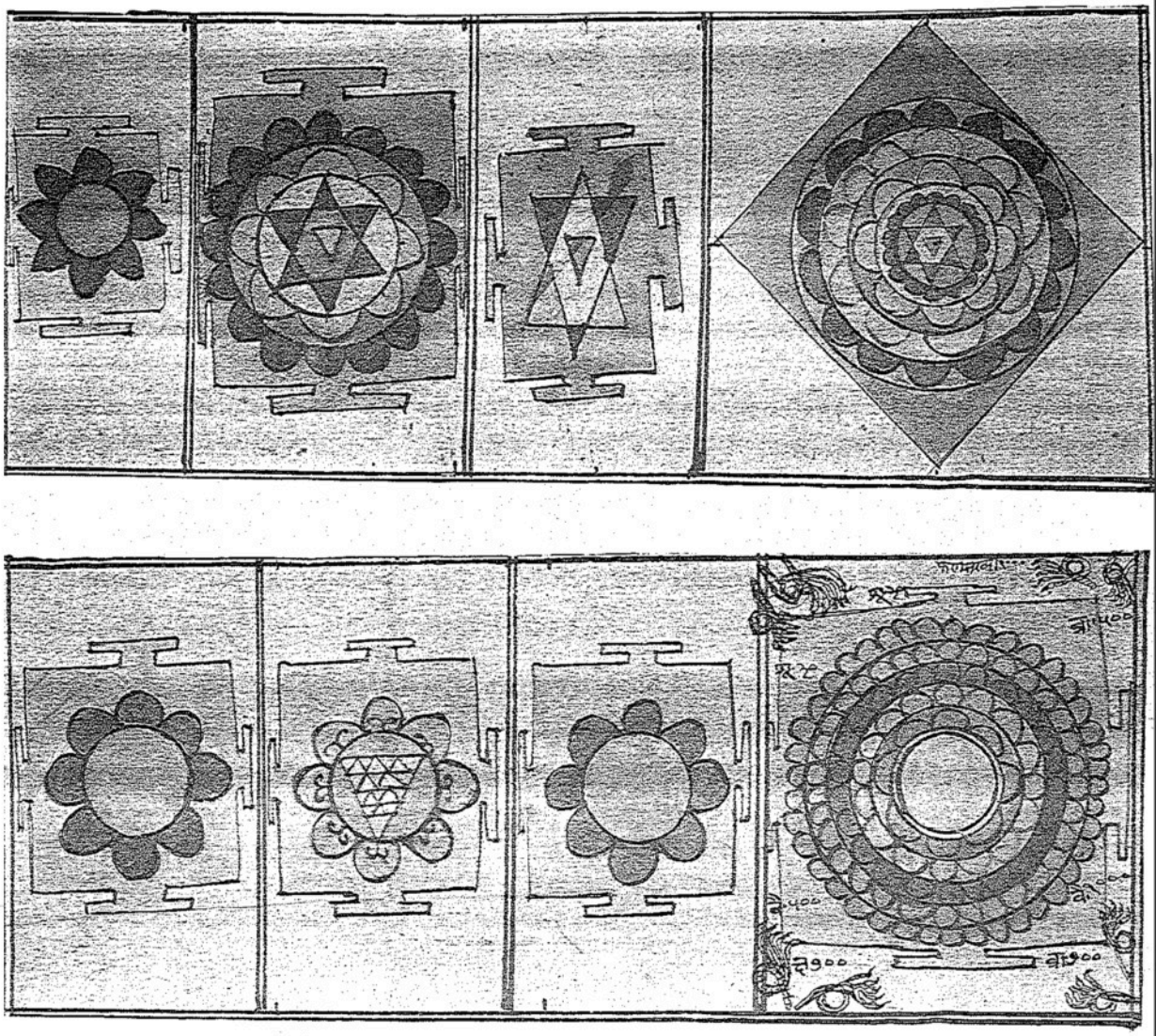
14 Yantra and seed mantras of the goddess Durgā, an aspect of Kālī, representing the dissolution of the dark forces of nature and triumph over evil. Rajasthan, 19th century. Ink and colour on paper



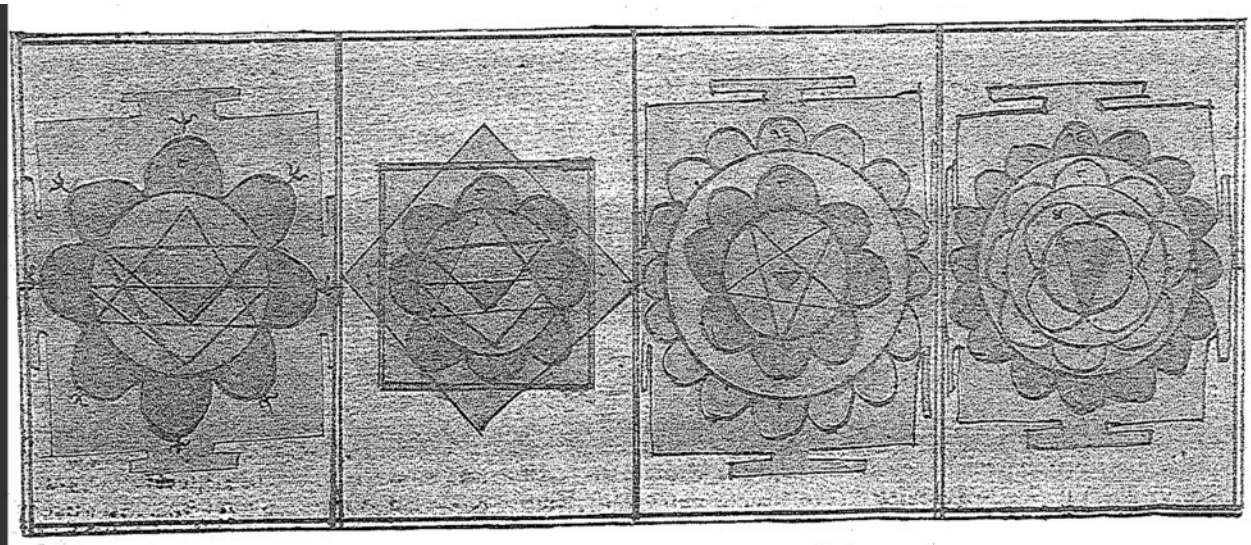
15 Yantra with the syllables Oṃ Hrīṃ inscribed in the centre and at the cardinal directions. This mantra is the symbol of the tantric goddess Lalitā, denoting her creative play (Māyā) which gives rise to the manifested world. Rajasthan, 19th century. Ink and colour on paper



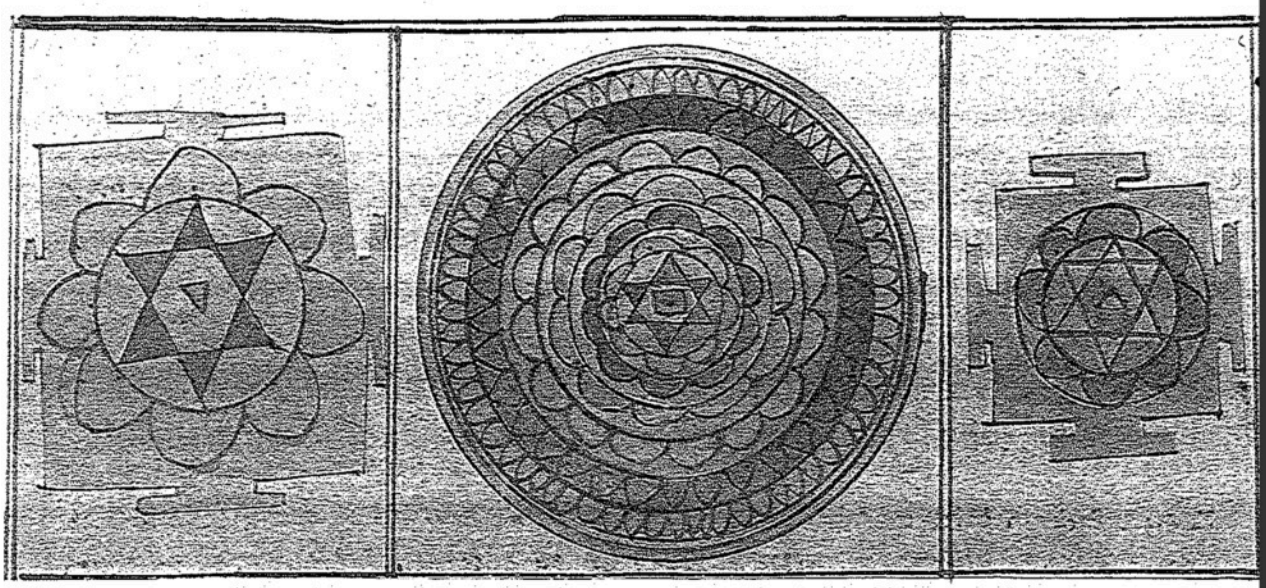
16 Kalyāṇa Chakra, the 'Wheel of Fortune'. The mystic syllables radiating from the centre are grouped in a cryptic manner in order to conceal the yantra's esoteric significance from the uninitiated. Rajasthan, c. 19th century. Ink and colour on paper



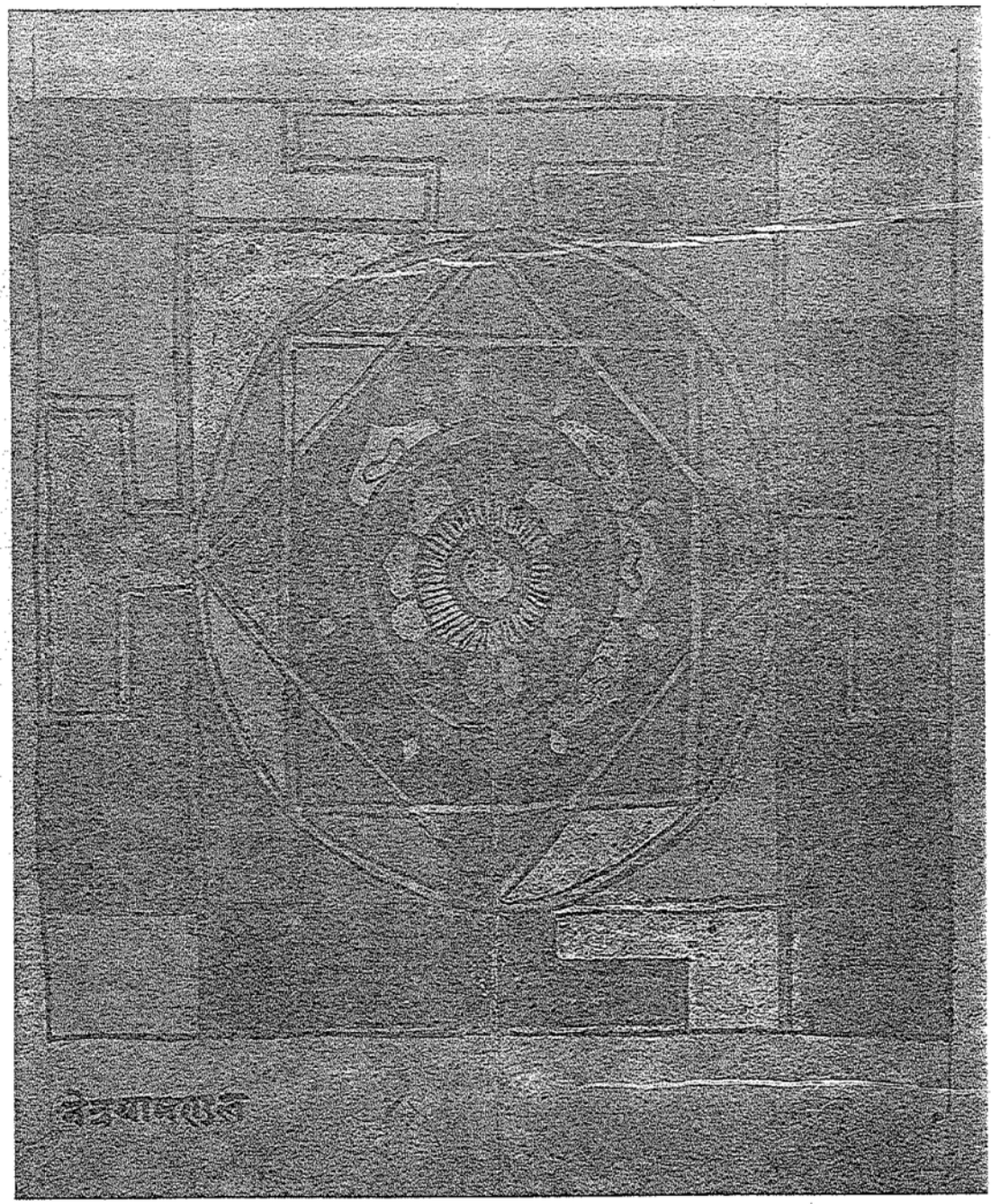
17, 18 All tantric deities have their corresponding yantra forms. Top, from left to right: yantra of Annapurṇā, a form of Durgā, and three yantras of Mahāvidyā Bagalā-mukhī: above, from left to right: two yantras of Sūrya, the Sun God; one of Śiva; and one of another aspect of Śiva, Mṛtunjaya, the Conqueror of Death. *Mantramanodadhi*, Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper



19 Ceremonial yantras of the partial aspects of the feminine or kinetic principle, which is considered by tantrikas to be the highest principle of the cosmos. Left, three yantras of the Supreme Energy as a young maiden, Bālā; right, an Annapurṇā Yantra devoted to the goddess as the giver of food and plenty. *Mantramahodadhi*, Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper



20 Yantras of deities are essentially aids to concentrated visualization and contemplation. The imagery of the cosmic 'whole' allows the worshipper to discover his own inner wholeness. Three yantras of the goddess Tārā draw the sādhaka's vision to the mystic centre. *Mantramahodadhi*, Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper



21 Yantra from a series used for inner visualization of the cosmic processes which provide a metaphysical basis for their symbolism, leading to the experience of man-cosmos unity. Nepal, c. 18th century. Gouache on board

3

Metaphysics of Yantra

Considered as being essentially guides to human enlightenment, yantras express a comprehensive vision of reality, illuminating for the sādhaka the nature and mystery of the cosmos. The framework of metaphysical teachings within which yantra symbolism evolved is a 'transcription' of the main principles of Indian thought, some of the oldest systematized speculations on man and nature.

One of the principal symbolic components of the yantra is the deities inscribed or depicted within its linear framework. So varied and numerous are the possible deity projections that the whole pattern of the yantra may be considered as a complex rubric of divine manifestations. These deities are expressions of conscious principles, relating the aspects of the manifested universe; and, as we shall see in the following chapters, they are equally symbols of the phases and forces of the human mind and personality.

Tantra has absorbed the whole corpus of earlier traditions and evolved its own cosmic vision, giving specific tantric interpretations to the traditional Hindu deities. Accordingly tantric Śaiva yantras project the manifold nature of Śiva; Vaishṇava yantras depict Vishṇu in his divine incarnations, with his qualities and characteristics; and yantras devoted to goddesses are the summary of the attributes and emanations of the Female Creative Power (Śakti). The surrounding deities of yantras – there may be as few as three or as many as one hundred in a single yantra – are technically known as Āvaraṇa Devatās (deities who shadow or veil the principal archetype). According to *Kāmakalāvilāsa* (v.35), in goddess yantras they are like a 'patch of cloud' which hides the luminous effulgence of the Primordial Goddess placed at the centre of the yantra whose radiance is like the sun. The Āvaraṇa Devatās are like the limbs of the primordial Śakti in her transformation in her yantra.

The Principle of Energy

A fuller understanding of the metaphysical basis of yantra must begin with consideration of the tantric doctrine of Śakti. Śakti is the immense power inherent in the universe. Everything that moves and breathes is a manifestation of Śakti and has its basic consciousness, power and action. Śakti is a creative mystery that displays itself in different spheres in different ways. To the physicist Śakti implies the inherent active force of matter; to the psychologist Śakti displays itself through the external stimulus that acts on the mind; to the mystic the spiritual experience of unity is Śakti. The entire edifice of science may be seen as being related to the notion of Śakti, with matter, energy, sound – all the main constituents of physical science –

displaying a power that is their essential nature. Everything in life possesses a force to transform, to become, to be, to expand its inherent nature and grow as it were from within, which is Śakti.

For tantra this Śakti is both transcendent (abstract) and immanent (concrete). If a synthesis of all active and potential forces were possible, there would still be an inexhaustible and untapped reservoir of this force. Śakti is therefore seen as creating, maintaining and absorbing every aspect of life and plane of existence. Although the Sanskrit word śakti is feminine, the concept refers to a cosmic principle that transcends finite explanations in terms of gender. Śakti, *Mahākāla Saṃhitā* states, 'is neither female nor male nor neuter. It is inconceivable, immeasurable Power, the Being of all which exists, Void of all duality, attainable in illumination.'[1]

The highest personification of the Supreme Energy Principle is expressed iconographically as feminine in the Tantras. Though neutral in her ultimate aspect, theologically Śakti is contemplated as a goddess, or Devī, under the names of Kālī, Tārā, Durgā, Pārvatī, Lakshmī, etc.

In early Indian history the vision of the sacred as feminine received little attention. Vedic theology was male-oriented, and goddesses were assigned peripheral roles: they appear as consorts to male gods and as subservient to male power. By the beginning of the tantric renaissance (AD 700–1300), however, the female reappeared with greater importance and began to share the grandeur of the gods. Eventually, goddesses exercised so great an influence in Hindu mythology that they overshadowed the previously male-dominated theology and became 'total' symbols of divine power.

The female principle as an emblem of kinetic or potential energy as well as the chief symbol of the Absolute Reality (Brahman) has since dominated the whole range of tantric thought.[2] In the *Devī Upanishad* (1–3) the Supreme Goddess explains her true nature, that transcends all empiric existence and represents all the attributes and functions of the Hindu trinity:

> Great Goddess, who art Thou?
> She replied: I am essentially Brahman [the Absolute].
> From me has proceeded the world comprising Prakṛiti [material substance]
> and Purusha [cosmic consciousness], the Void and the Plenum.
> I am [all forms of] bliss and non-bliss.
>
> Knowledge and ignorance are Myself.
> I am the five elements and also what is different from them, the pañchabhūtas
> [five gross elements] and tanmātras [five subtle elements].
>
> I am the entire world.
> I am the Veda as well as what is different from it.
> I am unknown; I am born
> Below and above and around am I.

The origin of the goddess has been described in several ancient texts.[3] A Hindu legend explains that in a battle to overthow negative forces, the denizens of heaven, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva, emitted a flood of their energy in all directions which condensed into the form of a woman. This is how Śakti, having emerged from

a miraculous amalgamation of the energy of the gods, concentrates all the powers of the gods in her person.

Around this central feminine principle, a complex and varied feminine theology has been developed in the Tantras. Innumerable goddesses were named, each representing one of the manifold aspects of the principal feminine divinity, and many have been given their symbolic identity in yantras. A substantial number of yantras of female divinities are described in some of the important tantric texts.[4] Several tantric texts[5] deal exclusively with specific goddesses and give elaborate descriptions of yantra, mantra, mode of worship, etc. Thus just as there is a representational iconography of feminine theology, there is, parallel to it, a symbolic, abstract, repertoire of Śakti yantras.

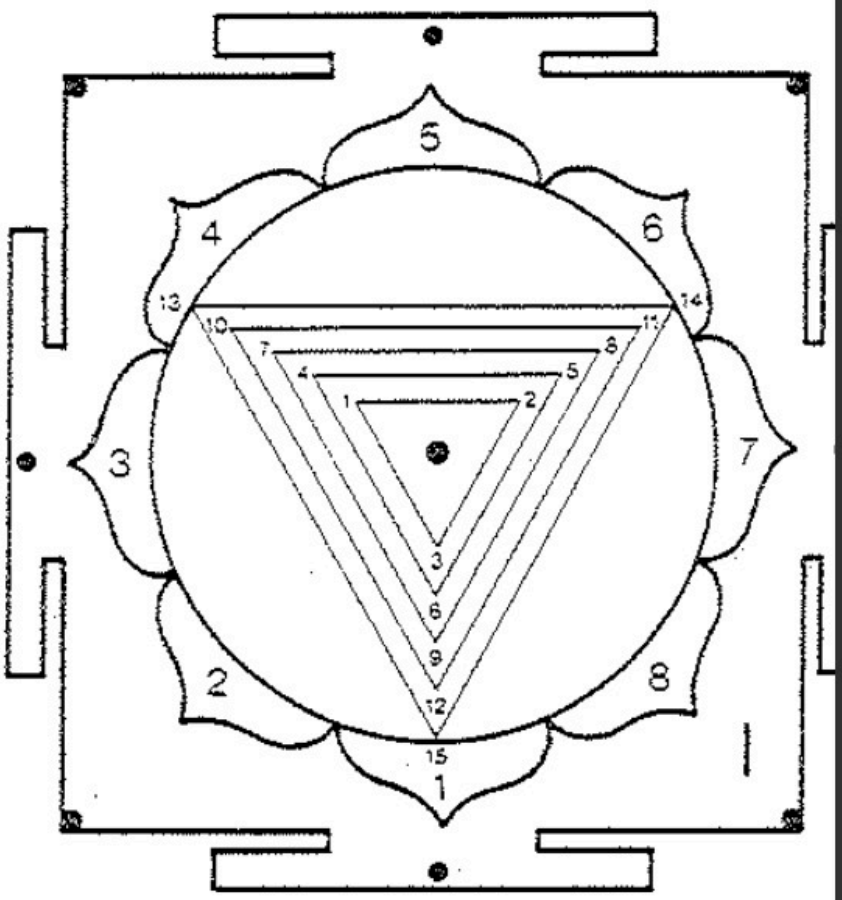
The theology of Śakti as feminine branched off into two major streams, the schools of the goddess Kālī (Kālī-kula) and the goddess Śrī, whose worship is known as Śrī Vidyā.[6] Both schools developed their own specific auxiliary deities around their central goddesses and also devised yantras which illustrate some of the dominant philosophical concepts of their respective systems of thought.

Yantra of Primordial Energy: Kālī

Kālī, one of the most awe-inspiring goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, gained an extraordinary popularity in tantra and is the object of fervent devotion in tantric forms of worship. Perhaps her great popularity in tantric ritual is explained by the fact that she is the embodiment of certain key metaphysical principles of the tantric tradition. Reigning supreme among goddesses in the Tantras, Kālī is a power-symbol displaying the original unity of the transcendental in her feminine form. Although her prehistory has been traced to Vedic origins and non-Aryan sources,[7] Kālī makes her 'official' first appearance in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*,[8] where she is said to have been born from the brow of Durgā in a battle between gods and demons. In this context, Kālī is considered as the terrible form of the great goddess Durgā, another consort-Śakti of Śiva, who was so called to commemorate her victory over the buffalo-demon Mahisha. Kālī's gory image and symbolically fierce appearance have been the subject of extensive descriptions in several tantric works. The *Karpurādistotra*, a short devotional hymn, describes an awe-inspiring vision of the goddess: Kālī is dark of skin, garbed in space (naked), with dishevelled hair; blood trickles from her mouth; in one hand she waves a sword and with the other holds a skull; her waist is girdled with severed heads. Kālī's favourite place of repose is a cremation ground littered with corpses.

The terror-drenched iconographic imagery of Kālī as the annihilating power of Time and the Energies of creation and dissolution is condensed in her yantra for worship into the bindu, a circle, an eight-petalled lotus and 'three pentagons' (actually five inverted concentric triangles).[9]

In her yantra form, Kālī appears in the central dot, or bindu, as a conscious source or womb of the world. She is the energy aspect of material nature, whose inexhaustible kinetic quality is possessed by and unites with the Absolute for the



Āvaraṇa (surrounding) deities invoked in the Kālī Yantr
In the 15 angles of the triangle: 1 Kālī, 2 Kapālinī, 3 Kulla, 4 Kurukulla, 5 Virodhinī, 6 Vipracittā, 7 Ugrā, 8 Ugraprabhā, 9 Dipta, 10 Nīlā, 11 Ghanā, 12 Balākā, 13 Mātrā, 14 Mudrā, 15 Mitā. In the 8 lotus petals: 1 Brahmī; 2 Indrāṇī; 3 Māheśvarī; 4 Cāmuṇḍā; 5 Kaumār 6 Aprājitā; 7 Vārāhī; 8 Nārsimhī; and the traditional deities of the eight regents of space. After the tantric work Kālī Tantra

sake of creation. Her primordial explosive will to create is contrasted with Purusha, the male principle, not as 'matter' to 'spirit' but as male to female. The bindu shows her non-separability and non-difference from the Supreme Male Principle, Śiva.

As the Supreme Generative Energy, Kālī is the material, instrumental and efficient cause of material nature, and in this aspect she is represented as Prakṛiti, symbolized by the lotus-form of the yantra. Her creative urge impels material force (Prakṛiti) to diversify into an infinite number of grosser forms. The eight petals of the lotus denote the eight elements of Prakṛiti – earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), ego-sense (ahaṃkāra) – of which the phenomenal world is held to be composed and which are none other than herself. Kālī's creative function as Prakṛiti associates her with the active power of time. She is the Mistress of Time who weaves the warp and woof of countless aeons from age to age. She represents the cyclic time-consciousness of nature that transcends the short span of individual destiny. Worlds emanate from her womb like bubbles from an ocean. Without her pulsating Prakṛiti-function, the whole of existence lies inert and unmoving as a corpse. Just as she is the creator, so she is the preserver, of the infinite cyclic order of time. Her ceaseless mother-aspect sustains life, while she simultaneously carries on her cataclysmic functions of creation and dissolution.

Prakṛiti in her phenomenal aspect is associated with the concept of Māyā – represented in the circle of the yantra. The word māyā has two connotations. Positively, it is the spontaneous, inexplicable power of the divine; Kālī is Mahā-māyā and the world is an effortless creation of her divine reflex. But in relation to created matter, the māyā-created world is viewed negatively as an all-pervasive veil, or delusion and ignorance. Māyā is that which intoxicates man and deludes him into taking the fleeting and shifting appearance of the world for reality. The lesson of Māyā is that man must apprehend the true nature of the world, the inner meaning of its secret forces operating beyond the flux of appearances. The circle of the Kālī Yantra symbolically indicates that the veils of Māyā which confine man to the 'circle' of life need to be pierced in order that he shall 'see' reality.

The fifteen corners of the five concentric inverted triangles of the Kālī Yantra represent the Avayavas, the 'aspects' or psychophysical states: the five organs of knowledge (jñāendriya); the five organs of action (karmendriya); the five vital airs (prāṇa); i.e. they relate to the body, the senses, and the receptive functions. The *Karpurādistotra* states that the symbols of the Kālī Yantra are to be taken into the body of the worshipper, while the famous tantrika poet-saint Rāmprasād (1718–75), in his hymn written in adoration of his patron goddess Kālī, bids the worshipper to 'Fashion Her image with the stuff of mind and set it on the lotus throne of your heart.' The Kālī Yantra is both an 'object' existing in the external world, and a 'subject' to be interiorized in the human body. Kālī is both a cosmic reality and a psychic fact.

Śakti-clusters

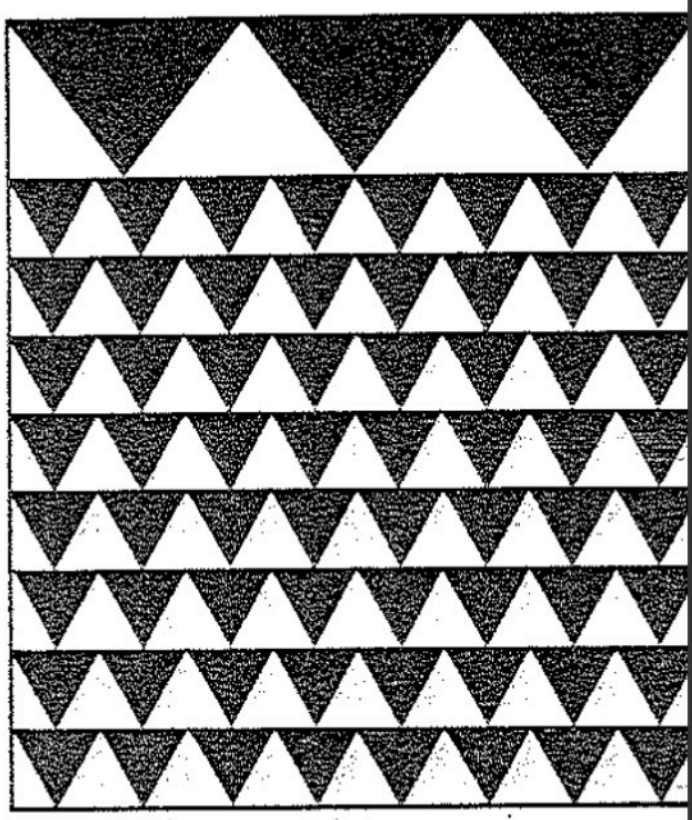
The role of the Supreme Śakti can be compared with the role of the sun in the solar system: like the sun, the Supreme Goddess is the source of countless 'energies',

female deities who are principally her emanations, or her partial archetypal images. The concept of Śakti emanations is similar to the doctrine of the incarnations of Vishṇu in Hindu tradition, but the notions of emanations and avatārs should not be confused. The immense array of Śakti transformations developed separate personifications and are classified in descending order. Certain goddesses are the complete manifestation (purṇaśakti) of the supreme female principle; some are her partial emanations (aṁśa-rūpinī); some are fractions of her power (kalā-rūpinī); the last group – mortal women are included here – constitute the 'parts of the parts of fractions' of the Supreme Goddess (kalāṁśa-rūpinī). These manifestations may be worshipped individually or collectively in a 'circle' of goddesses. The innumerable Śaktis appearing in yantras are obviously ordered and generally form clusters like galaxies, which 'orbit' together. In principle, a particular divinity is assigned to a specific group, moves with it and is worshipped in the centre (pīṭha-sthāna) of the yantra; like the sun, she commands the luminous sphere of her Śakti-cluster, who are disposed on the inner circuits of the yantra, on the lotus petals and within the square band. Each of these Śaktis is a power emblem, poised to transform the baser aspects of material existence into the radiance of being. All these divinities have their roots in Śiva's 'consort', who is held to be the source of the 'entire female mythological system'.[10]

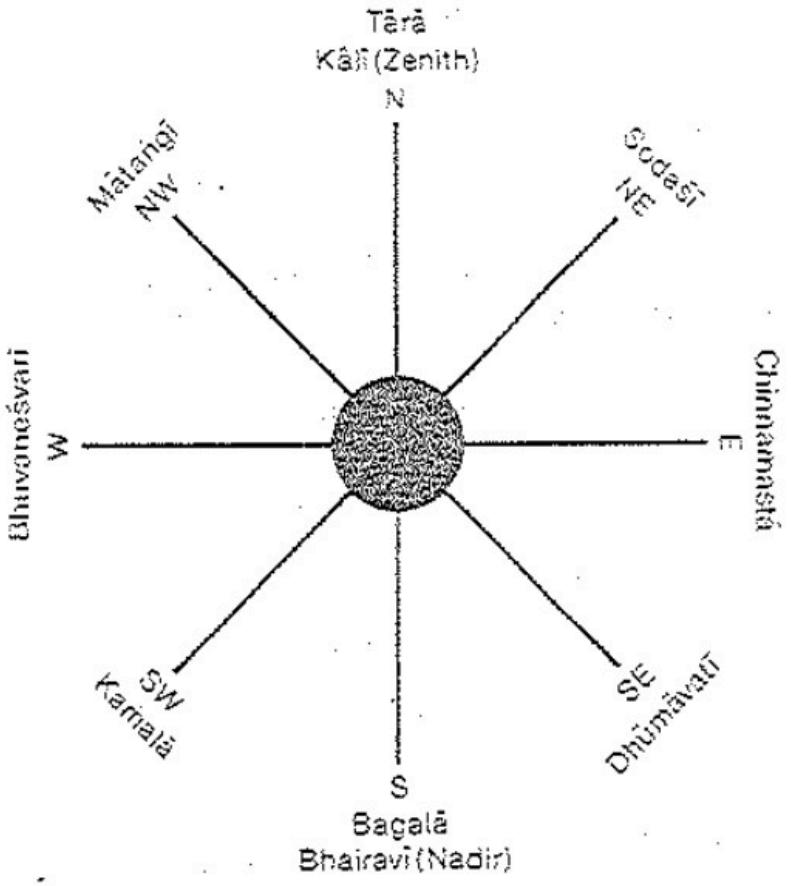
Daśa-Mahāvidyās: the Śakti-cluster of the 'Ten Great Wisdoms'

The 'knowledge' aspect of Kālī is represented by a Śakti-cluster of goddesses who are known as the Daśa-Mahāvidyās, the Ten Great or 'Transcendent' Wisdoms. The *Devībhāgavata Purāṇa* explains the mythical origin of these goddesses, essentially goddess transformations of Kālī. In a feud between Śiva and Sati (his consort Pārvatī), the goddess transformed herself into her terrible aspect as Kālī. Seeing her horrific image, Śiva tried to flee from the scene, whereupon Kālī in all her magnificence 'filled' the four quarters, in the ten directions, with her ten energies or major forms, which are to her what sparks are to fire.

The myth symbolically alludes to the notion that the ten energies encompass the whole knowledge of the universe. Together, they are the expression of the cycles of life, and the summary of all planes of existence. These feminine embodiments of knowledge constitute the power of wisdom that rouses the aspirant from the illusion of existence, and awakens dormant qualities of mind towards conscious awareness and perfect wisdom. In their yantra forms they are a cluster of varying degrees of concentration and are aspected either as divine, heroic, terrifying, demonic or peaceful, or as embodiments and consummations of human perfection. In a particularly tantric connotation their contrasting aspects, the horrific and beneficent, constitute two opposite principles. They inspire and shock, flower and fade, simultaneously, since the polarity of the divine nature is perfectly acceptable within the tantric system. In their 'knowledge' aspect their greatest boon is that they represent forces that are related to the powers of time, of death, of the continuous



Yantra devoted to the Śakti-cluster of 64 Yoginīs, tantric deities representing the cycle of time. Each inverted triangle is the sacred seat of the Devī



Śakti-cluster of the ten Mahāvidyās and their association with the regents of space, indicating that they contain the knowledge of the whole cosmos, encompassing all

flux in life which is a constant reminder that life is a passing phenomenon, continuously devouring and being devoured. To a mind that is sunk in the mire of worldly illusion, the power of time appears as fearful. But for the aspirant, the confrontation of the brevity of existence symbolized by the fearful aspect of the goddess generates conscious introspection and renewed spiritual impetus.

There are specific Tantras devoted to each of the ten Mahāvidyās,[11] each named after a goddess and explaining her nature, yantra, mode of ritual, and the benefits that are gained from her ritual. Two main centres of the Daśa-Mahāvidyā worship are Bengal and Mithila in Bihar state, eastern India. In Mithila, when a child is born the local priest assigns one of the ten Mahāvidyās as his chosen deity (Ishṭa-devatā) and the individual generally adheres throughout his life to the worship of the deity in either a yantra or image form.

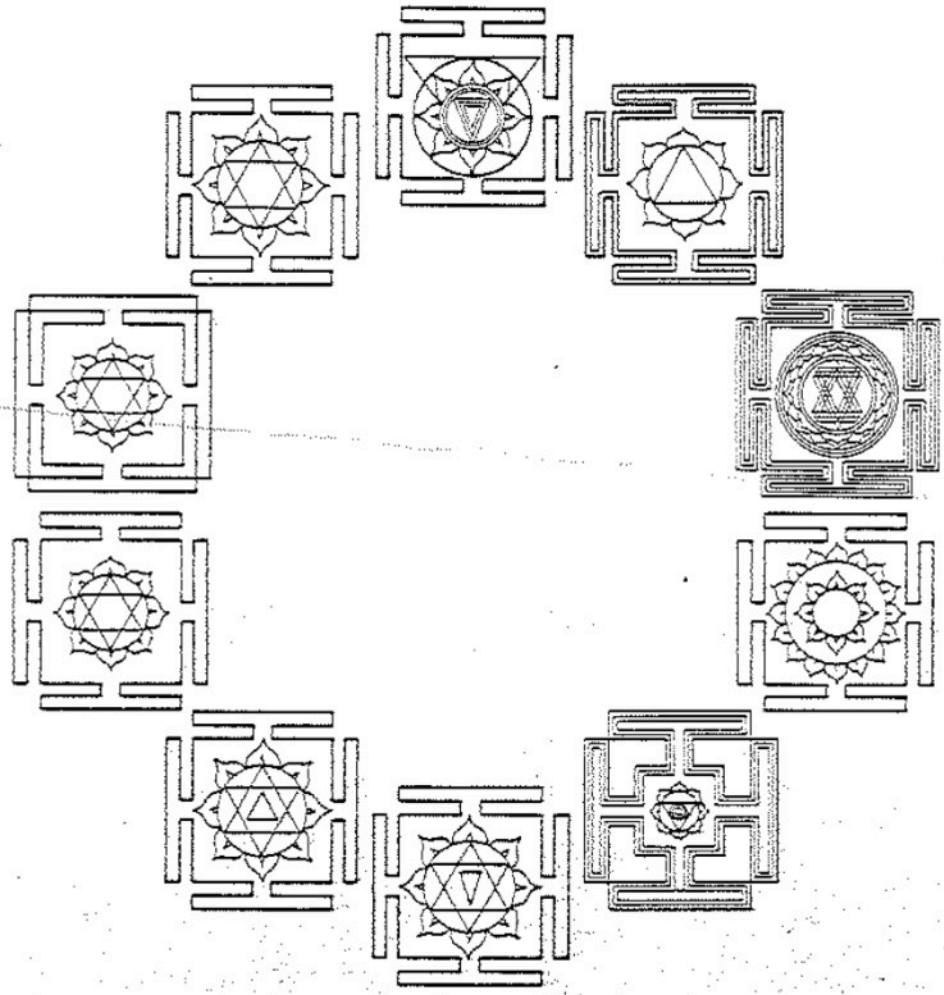
Each of the goddesses has a specific cosmic function. The first Mahāvidyā is Kālī herself. As we have seen in discussing her yantra, Kālī is the Śakti of Kāla, or the transcendent power of Time; she is the embodiment of the time-force of the universe and is therefore the primordial evolutionary principle. Her seed mantra is Krīṃ.

Time-movement presupposes change and transformation, so the second Mahāvidyā, Tārā, symbolizes the power of aspiration, spiritual ascent, the potential that is actualized through the process of transformation. Her yantra is an eight-petalled lotus in a circle, with an inverted triangle, the first pattern of cosmic location significantly representative of the goddess's fundamental urge, the pure desire to create. Her seed mantra is Oṃ.

The third Mahāvidyā, Ṣoḍaśī, represents the power of perfection and sustenance. Her name means 'sixteen', a number associated with perfection and totality (see pp. 65–6). Ṣoḍaśī is the full cycle of creation, when the entire universe, like a flower, is in full bloom, a quality that is represented in her yantra with its nine 'cosmic wombs'. She is one of the goddesses of this group who is worshipped widely in her own right. She is the chief deity of the Śrī Vidyā form of worship (see pp. 42–3) and is invoked either in the great Śrī Yantra or in her own yantra, the Nava-yoni Chakra. Her seed mantras are Aiṃ, Klīṃ, Sauh.

The fourth goddess-transformation is the Lady of the Spheres, Bhuvaneśvarī, who illumines the universe with her radiance and beauty. She appears in her yantra seated on a star hexagon which is associated with the transcendent immensity of the two (male and female) principles as one. With the colour of the rising sun and moon as her diadem, her anthropomorphic image placed in the centre of the yantra is surrounded by two rings of eight- and sixteen-petalled lotuses. Whereas Kālī is supreme as time-consciousness of the universe, Bhuvaneśvarī is the chief projection of space-consciousness, a quality recalled in part of her name (Bhu = space, and also support). The supporter of all existence, she is, therefore, extension, expansion and infinite space in which everything is contained, and is also the ruler of the three spheres, earth, atmosphere and the heavens as space. Her seed mantra is Hrīṃ.

The fifth Mahāvidyā, Chinnamastā, symbolizes the end of existence or the consummation of the ever-burning, ever-devouring life-cycle that precedes and



The yantra cluster of the ten Mahāvidyās (from the top, clockwise): Mahāvidyā Kālī, Tārā, Ṣoḍasī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Chinnamastā, Tripurā Bhairavī, Dhūmāvatī, Bagalā-mukhī, Mātaṅgī, Kamalā. A variant after the tantric manual Śākta-pramodaḥ

influences resurrection. She is shown decapitated, holding her head in her left hand, 22
while drinking streams of blood-nectar flowing from her own severed neck. In her
yantra, the destructive aspect of her image is implied symbolically by triangles and 23
circles. Her seed mantra is Huṃ.

Tripurā Bhairavī, the sixth manifestation, is the embodiment of the power of destruction and is constantly dissolving the world by her incessant active (rājasika) tendency. Her yantra is a hexagon placed within a circle of lotuses, and her seed mantra is Hsraiṃ, Hsklriṃ, Hssrauh. All existence is permeated by the two opposing forces of growth and decay; all that exists is subject to dissolution from the very first moment of its being. The annihilating power of time is represented in the yantra of this goddess by the nine triangles which symbolize the disintegrating planes of existence.

The omnipotently destructive Tripurā Bhairavī is followed by the ash-coloured Mahāvidyā Dhūmāvatī, the embodiment of ultimate destruction. Her all-powerful destructive tendency, with which she reduces the world to ashes, is recalled in her name, the 'Smoky One'. Dhūmāvatī is the night of cosmic slumber, a state of existence when everything in the universe lies inert, unused and 'dead'. She is conceived as a 'widow' and therefore without a male consort. She symbolizes

ignorance and darkness veiled within itself; her outward manifestations in the world are despair, dread, poverty, hunger and misfortune. Dhūmāvatī's yantra is a hexagon within an eight-petalled lotus and her seed mantra is Dhum.

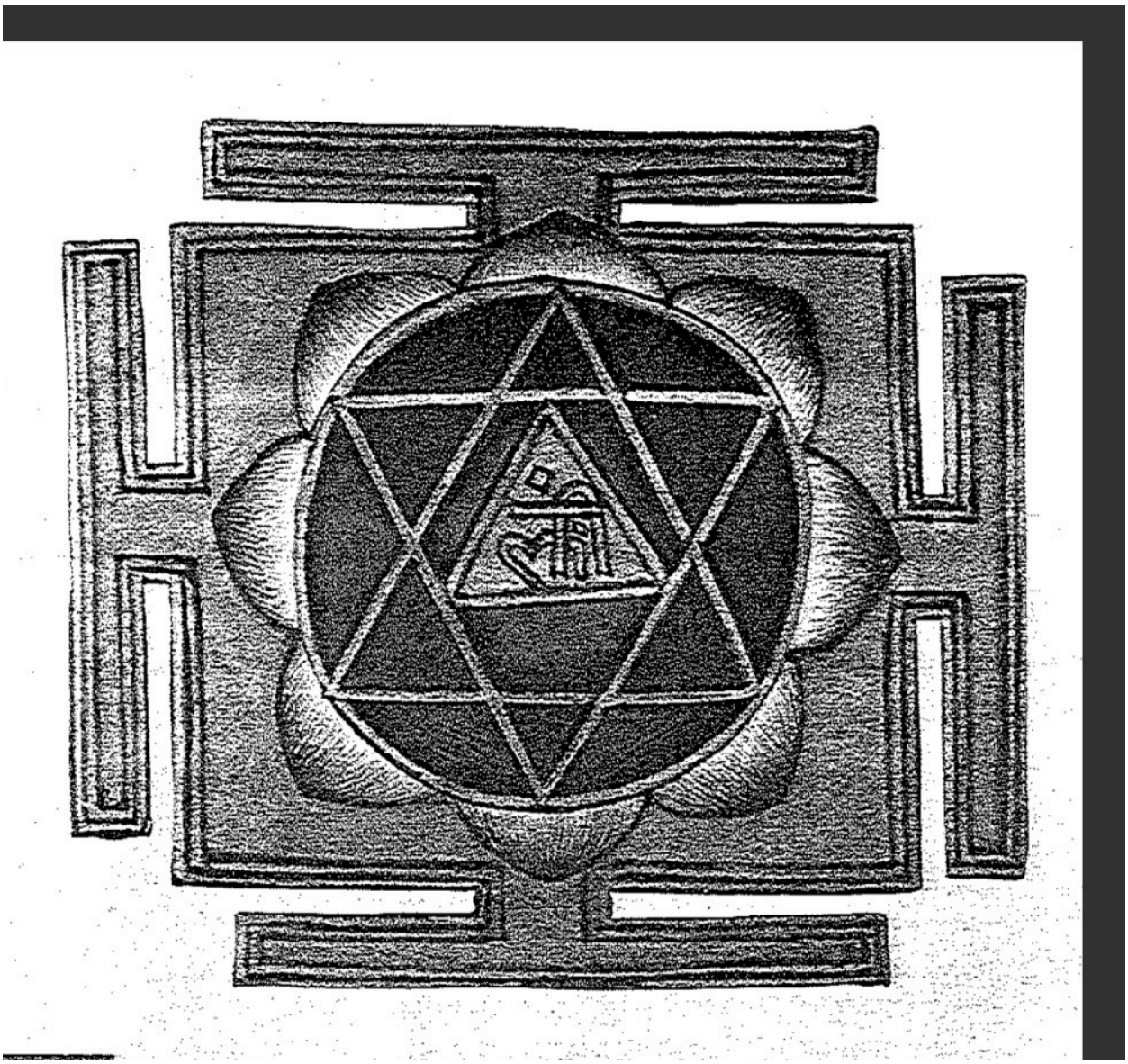
The eighth manifestation of Kālī is the crane-headed goddess Bagalā-mukhī who represents the unconscious tendencies in man that lead him towards illusion, though her power immobilizes and stifles all movements and actions. By her force fire turns cold and anger is appeased. She is propitiated to suspend activities of nature. Her yantra is like Dhūmāvatī's apart from an additional triangle within the hexagon. Her seed mantra is Hlrīṃ.

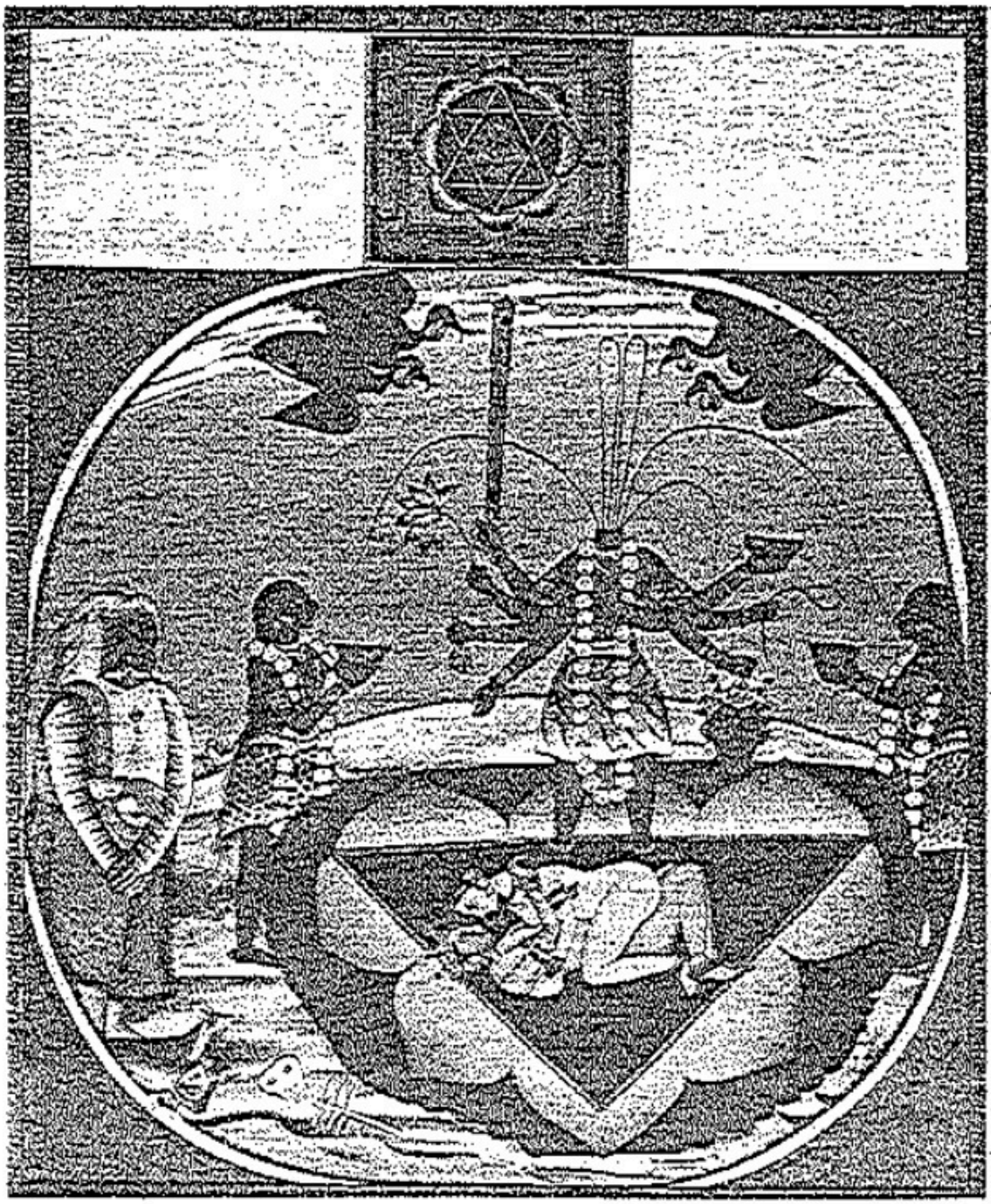
The ninth Mahāvidyā, Mātaṅgī, represents the power of domination, dispels evil and dispenses justice. Her yantra, again, is like Dhūmāvatī's and is differentiated by her seed mantra.

The tenth Mahāvidyā, the lotus-coloured Kamalā, is like a flower blossoming in everything and represents a state of reconstituted unity. She is the embodiment of all that is desirable and therefore reveals herself in good fortune. Everything joyful is associated with her. The yantra of this Mahāvidyā, too, is a hexagon placed within a circle of lotuses, and is differentiated by her seed mantra, Śrīṃ.

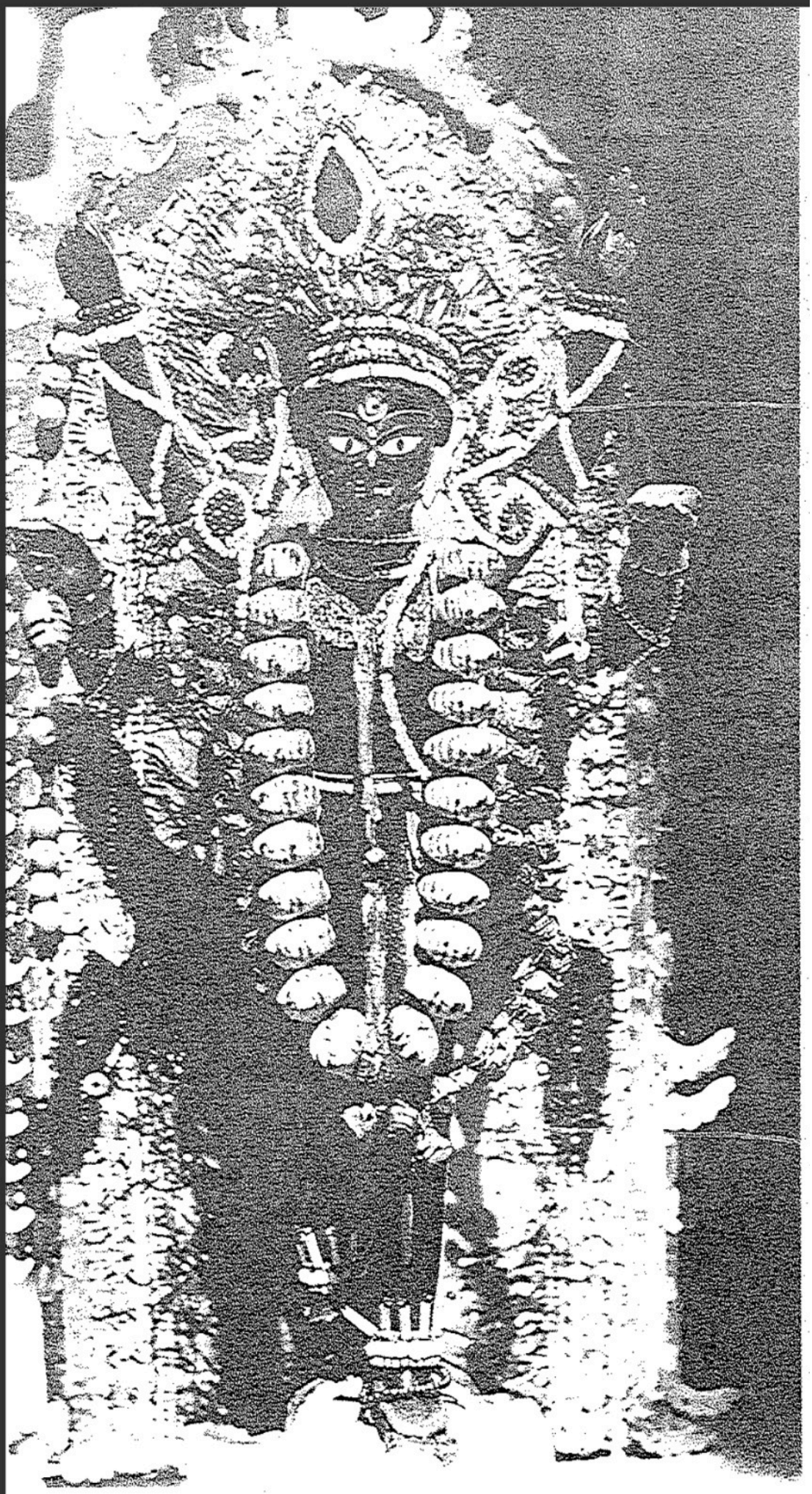
The ten Mahāvidyās can broadly be grouped as belonging to descending or ascending planes of reality. Starting from the nadir of creation, there are the Mahāvidyās associated with the darker forces of life which are invoked through their yantras for occult or magical purposes, while those at the zenith of creation and dominated by the effulgence of the pure state of being are invoked for spiritual knowledge of the highest order. All the aspects of goddess-transformations bring liberation, although some may bring the aspirant to the shores of knowledge, others to the summit.

In the tantric tradition, especially among Śāktas (worshippers of the Female Principle), these deities are looked upon with great veneration because they hold the key to the psychic transformation of the seeker. The ten goddesses act as an impulse of intelligence. Their gory associations are meant to horrify and shock. They strip reality bare in order that the seeker may confront the truth of transience. There is, however, another revelation of the Tantras which is brought out boldly through this Śakti-cluster: that life and its manifold processes are not an inert, even, state of oneness; what justifies existence is variety, contradiction, change and multiplicity. Tantrism shows a preference for a dynamic concept of cosmic unity which implies a harmony of all differentiations and paradoxes. The Śakti-cluster of the Mahāvidyās as a whole reflects this dynamic unity of existence in which all aspects of life, the darkest, the purest, the most forceful and the inert, have been combined to form a whole. The ultimate consummation for the sādhaka lies in his absorbing this vision of unity in diversity.

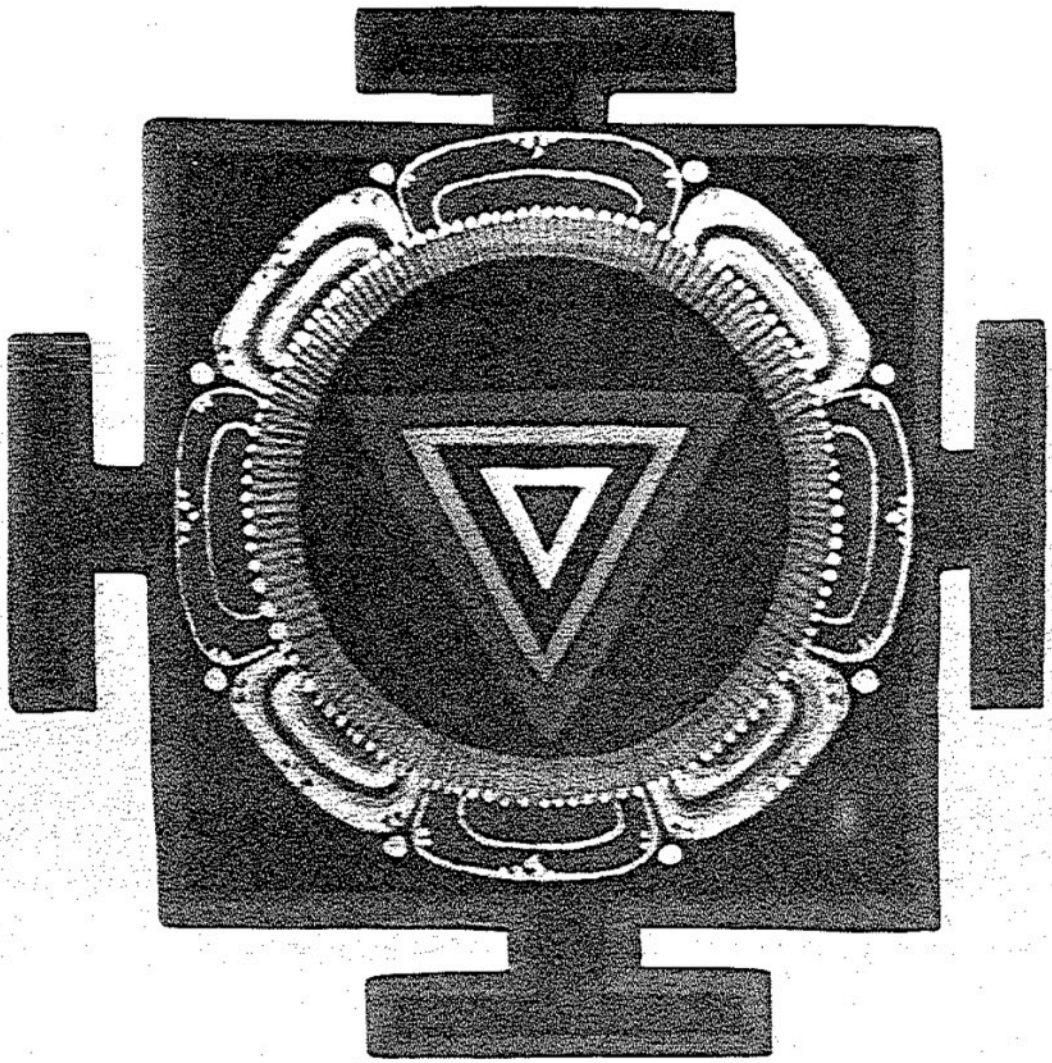




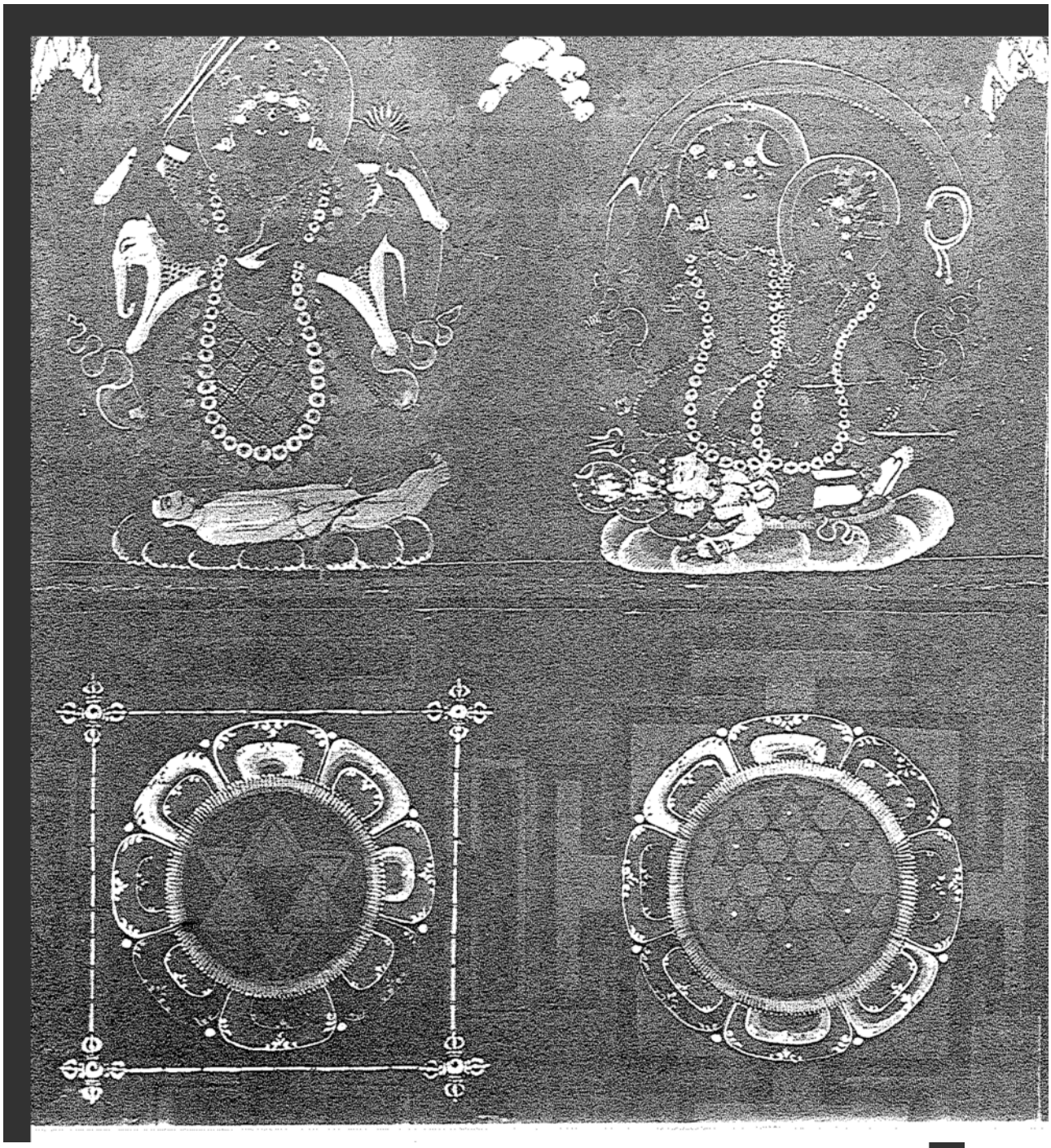
22, 23 Mahāvidyā Chinnamastā, fifth transformation of the great goddess Kālī, in iconic and yantra forms. The Devī with her two Śaktis (female energies) whom she nourishes represent the triad of cosmic phases – creation, preservation, and dissolution – triple and cyclical functions symbolized equally by the triangles and circle of the yantra. Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper



24, 25 Contemporary image of the great goddess Kālī, first in the cluster of ten goddesses known as Mahāvidyās, and the primal Śakti, symbolizing the triple cosmic phases of creation, preservation and dissolution – that is, embracing the totality of existence. Below, Kālī's presence is invoked during ritual worship by Śrī Satyanand Giri, a tantric guru of Kalighat, Calcutta



26 Kālī Yantra, an image of the cosmic functions of the Supreme Energy. Nepal, c. 1761. Gouache on paper



27 Śiva as Kāmeśvara (top left), the personification of primordial desire, and Śiva with his Śakti, Kāmeśvarī (top right). The cosmic pair represent the primordial male and female principles, and the corresponding energy patterns are shown below. Nepal. c. 1761. Gouache on paper

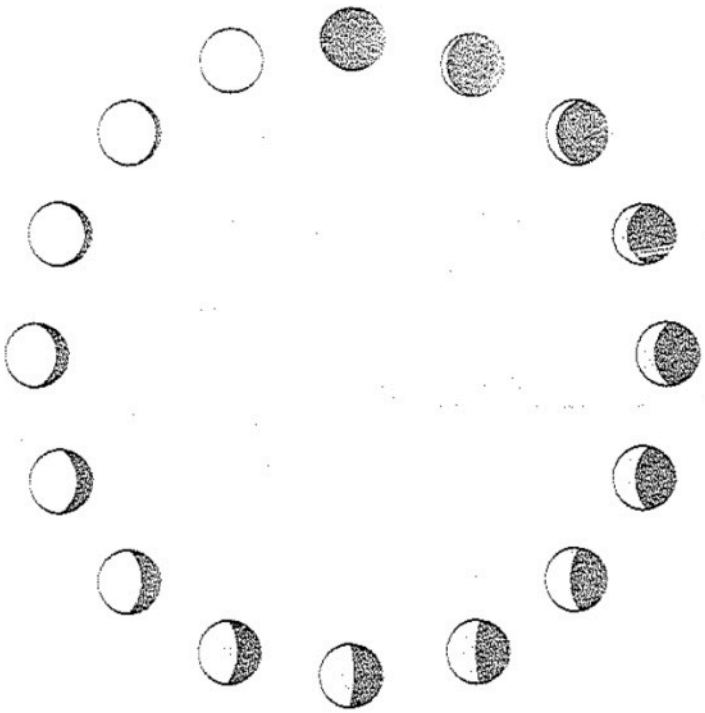
Cosmic Time: the Nityā Śaktis

The Supreme Energy is personified as Cosmic Time in the great goddess Ādyā Nityā Lalitā (Ādyā = primordial, Nityā = eternal), who divides herself sixteenfold and is to be contemplated as sixteen Nityā Śaktis. These Śaktis' descriptions, with their meditations and yantras, occur in the *Tantrarāja Tantra*.[12] The Nityā Śaktis partake of the luminous nature of the moon in the bright half of the month, and their esoteric symbolism is based on the mathematical enumeration and multiplication of the number 16 which has mystical associations in Indian tradition. The imagery of the sixteen moon digits (or Kalās = fractions) is drawn from the cycle of the moon which waxes, wanes, disappears and is 'reborn', a symbol of recurrence, fecundity and abundance. Just as in the bright half of the lunar month the moon appears to evolve gradually in fractions until its fifteen parts vanish and merge in the 'whole', or full moon, though its actual unity remains unchanged, so the fifteen minor Nityā Śaktis (also known as Kalās) are partial emanations of their principal archetype, the Ādyā Nityā. Each digit of the moon has been given a special name and an attribute, and each Śakti personifies a phase of the moon and has been assigned a special yantra, mantra and auxiliary divinity in which her 'presence' is worshipped for the fulfilment of worldly joys.

The number 16 is arrived at by multiplying the three qualities (guṇas) of material nature (sattva or mind, rajas or energy, and tamas or inertia) by the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, ether): $3 \times 5 = 15$, and adding the Nityās' single transcendent source, the Ādyā Nityā. Together, the Śaktis and their sixteen yantras form a unity embracing the manifold nature of the universe and typifying all that the universe holds.

The 'totality' of the lunar phase may also be represented iconographically, as the sixteen-armed image of the Supreme Goddess, or as a body maṇḍala consisting of the worship of sixteen virgins (Kumārī pūjā), in which sixteen girls aged from one to sixteen are worshipped in turn, starting from the first day of the new moon.

The most significant application of the sixteen yantras of the Nityā Śaktis and their associated mantras is to provide a model of cosmic time. India does not think in terms of historical time, but has developed the conception of cyclical time through the doctrine of 'yuga' or ages. A complete cosmic cycle consists of four successive ages of varying length, in the ratios 4:3:2:1. The 16 yantras of the Nityā Śaktis are multiplied by reshuffling the 36 Sanskrit consonants (their mantras) according to prescribed rules to give the key number of yantras, 576, which multiplied by 3,000, also prescribed by the Tantras,[13] gives the duration of the first and longest age, Satya-yuga, i.e. 1,728,000 solar years. The second age, Tretā-yuga, is thus 1,290,000 solar years; the third, Dvāpara-yuga, consists of 864,000 years; and the fourth, the present age, Kalī-yuga, consists of 432,000 years. Time flows through the ages like an endless river, never exhausting itself. Each age has its period of zenith and decline. The four ages are succeeded by a state of universal cataclysm when everything 'bursts into flame', and then the universe will evolve again *ad infinitum*. Thus the microcosmic unity of a single moon phase is repeated on a cosmic time scale.



The circle of the Nityā Śaktis is a reservoir of delight, for they embody all those aspects of life that make existence a celebration of the spirit. They combine the all-beneficent aspects of the divine. As partial manifestations of transcendent completeness, they are representative of life-affirming qualities and the primal founts of power to bestow worldly joys. Thus worship of their yantras grants boons, dispels fear and brings enjoyment to the worshipper. Esoterically, their yantras may be used for higher meditation, but exoterically they are employed as wish-fulfilment charts. Thus the first Nityā Śakti, Ādyā Nityā, is all-beneficent; Kāmeśvarī is the fulfiller of desires; Bhagamālinī charms and incites; Nityāklinna grants fortune and supernatural powers (siddhis); Bheruṇḍā frees from evil influences; Vahnivāsinī (the fire-dweller) can make one master of the forces of nature and in the three worlds; Mahāvajreśvarī (the embodiment of mercy) destroys cruelty; Dūtī (the chief saviour of the devotees) destroys fear, bestows prosperity and the objects of one's desires; Tvaritā grants beauty and fame and expands the faculties of learning; Kulasundarī bestows all esoteric knowledge; Nityā-Nityā is beneficent; Nilapatakā bestows mastery over evil forces in nature; Vijayā stands for conquests and prosperity; Sarvamaṅgalā is totally beneficent; Jvālāmālinī bestows propitious esoteric knowledge of one's previous births; Chitrā grants the objects of one's desires.

Though it is true that, since the female principle gained popularity in the tantric pantheon, an immense number of yantras have been assigned to the various aspects of Śakti, nevertheless within the goddess's kinetic and pulsating nature is a point of stillness which can only be fulfilled by a counter-principle, her exact opposite, represented by Śiva.

Moon phases representing the Śakti-cluster of Nityā Śaktis. Beginning from the dark night: Kāmeśvarī Nityā, Bhagamālinī Nityā, Nityāklinna Nityā, Bheruṇḍā Nityā, Vahnivāsinī Nityā, Mahāvajreśvarī Nityā, Dūtī Nityā, Tvaritā Nityā, Kulasundarī Nityā, Nityā-Nityā, Nilapatakā Nityā, Vijayā Nityā, Sarvamaṅgalā Nityā, Jvālāmālinī Nityā, Chitrā Nityā, and Ādyā Nityā representing the full moon.

Cosmic biunity: Śiva-Śakti

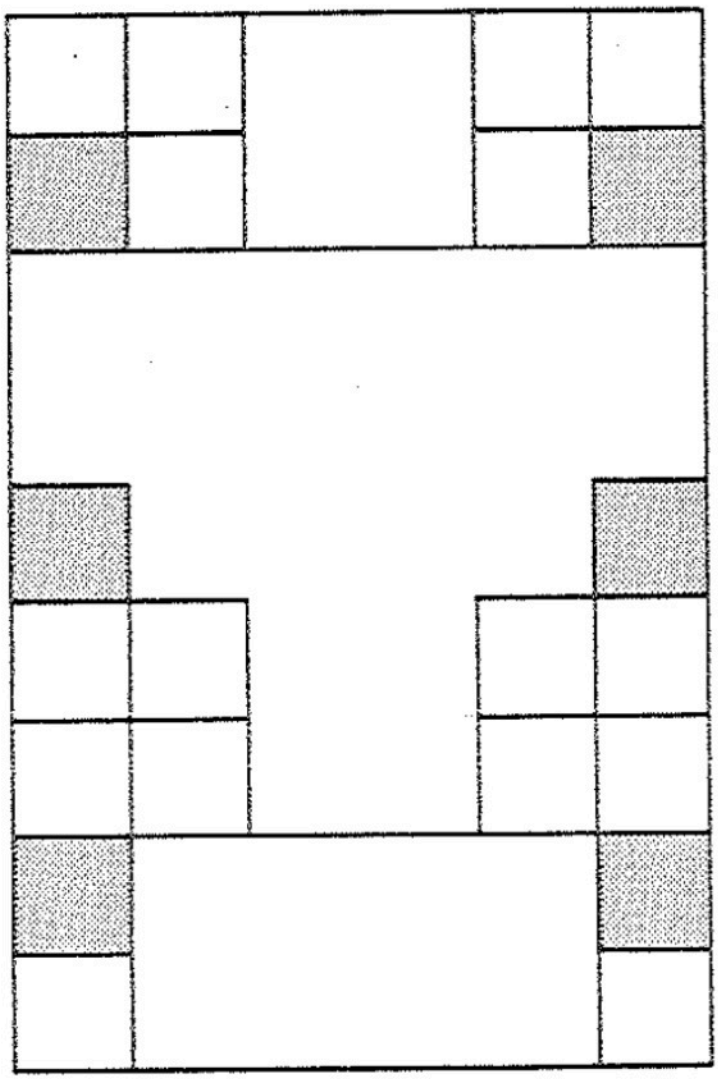
In the essentially dualistic cosmic vision of tantrism the kinetic verve of the primordial female energy (Śakti) is supported by an indispensable correlative principle, Śiva (Purusha) or the male principle. Śiva is identified with cosmic consciousness and as the static substratum to all phenomena. Complementary and 'opposite' to the inert Śiva is Śakti, whose essential nature is to be active, creative, mobile, and to pulsate with the rhythm of life. Śiva is the silent seer of all phenomena, the innermost focal point of the subjective self (consciousness or cosmic spirit) and Śakti is the phenomenon itself (matter or nature = Prakṛiti). The whole universe lies extended between these two opposite yet complementary principles, and all creation is held to be a result of the creative play (līlā) between them. In our own sphere of existence these two cosmic principles appear as opposed (male/female, static/dynamic, plus/minus), but in conceptual terms their contrariety is the basis of syntheses – unity is the foundation of duality – and their quiescence is in fact a perfectly balanced tension.

Though the universe is an expansion of the mystic combination in the Śiva-Śakti equation and though the two principles are diametrically opposed they are 'essentially' identical. Their mutual dependency is so great that they remain inseparable, since each requires the other in order to manifest its total nature. The *Śaiva Purāṇa* (4, 4) emphatically states: 'Just as moonbeams cannot be separated from the moon nor the rays from the sun so Śakti cannot be distinguished from Śiva.' So close is their interrelation that there can be no Śiva without Śakti and no Śakti without Śiva. This cosmic biunity is paralleled as 'psychic biunity' in the human male and female, and suggests that there is necessarily feminine in every man and masculine in every woman, as partial illuminations of a whole.

In yantra the chief emblems of these two principles are the liṅga, the phallic object, representing the Śiva principle, and the yoni, the vulva, denoting Śakti. The combined liṅga-yoni has been the object of veneration of the various sects of Hinduism – Śaivaites, Śāktas and Tantrikas – who worship it as the principal symbol of divine biunity.

In this context liṅga and yoni should not be interpreted as references to the physical male and female sex-organs or to human sexual intercourse, nor is the liṅga to be regarded as part of Śiva's body: it signifies the static principle whose visible form has also been given a shape of an egg (aṇḍa-rūpa Brahman) and characterizes the essential being of Śiva in the 'attributeless' (nishkala) aspect. It is the cosmogonical emblem of his substance.[14] Similarly, the yoni does not refer to the individual female vulva, but through the emblem to the sum-total of the creative womb, the kinetic field of creation that impels static forces towards movement, change and expansion. The emblems, therefore, point to archetypal principles and operate above the level of mundane consciousness.

In Hindu myth, however, the liṅga is taken as a sexual symbol paradoxically fulfilling a cosmic function, and the myth of the origin of liṅga-worship, from the ancient *Mahābhārata*, is described in terms of a cure for Śiva's unabated sexual desire:



Liṅga and yoni pedestal, detail from the grid-square type of Śaiva yantra, showing the imperishable unity of the male and female principles (see also pls. 70, 73–4)

> The sages cursed Śiva's liṅga to fall to the earth, and it burnt everything before it like fire. Never still, it went to the netherworld and to heaven and everywhere on earth. All creatures were troubled, and the sages went in desperation to Brahmā who said to them, 'As long as the liṅga is not still there will be nothing auspicious in the universe. You must propitiate Devī so that she will take the form of the yoni, and then the liṅga will be still.' They honoured Śiva, and he appeared and said, 'If my liṅga is held in the yoni, then all will be well. Only Pārvatī can hold the liṅga and then it will become calm.'[15] They propitiated him and thus liṅga-worship was established.

Śiva's phallus and Pārvatī's yoni are presented as sexual emblems but on the deeper, non-mythological level they represent the non-separability of antithetical principles which cannot be at rest when disunited. Their 'synthesis' restores balance, changing a state of chaos and disequilibrium caused by their separation to perfect continuity and equilibrium.

This polarity is represented figuratively in the icons of Śakti sitting upright on the body of the inert Śiva, 'not to destroy him', as Agehananda points out, but to symbolize for the devotee the basis of its cosmosophy: '"Śiva without Śakti" is a corpse'.[16] In other words, Śakti, kinetic energy, is the instrument to arouse the slumbering Śiva beneath her. Again representing unity in duality, Śiva is sometimes shown as Ardhanārīśwara, the half-female and half-male deity, in which the right half is depicted as female and the left half as male.

This cardinal doctrine of cosmic biunity is expressed in many yantras dedicated to the Śiva-Śakti principle. Such yantras are often constructed as a network of squares, with liṅga-yoni emblems within their geometrical framework. The colours of the rhythmically arranged patterns of identical squares are themselves used to exemplify the contrasts of dynamism and become a way of expressing the dualistic principle.

In Hinduism, time and space are considered cyclical and self-perpetuating. All existence issued from a single source and ultimately returns to its point of origin. Thus it can be abstractly viewed not as a linear motion in a single direction but as forming a curve. Planets and constellations move in orbits to trace expanding and contracting spheres. These curvilinear cosmic images are the basis for the roundness of the Śiva-liṅga (though in the Śaiva yantras the 'curve' is 'squared' and adapted into a geometrical framework).

The geometricized Śiva-liṅga in most yantras lies embedded in the yoni-shaped pedestal (yoni-pīṭha): embraced by Śiva, Śakti manifests her creative powers, becomes the flow of evolution and blossoms into infinity. As the force of nature, she withdraws and creates the universe in her womb-like vessel. The pedestal-yoni, therefore, is given the elongated shape of a sacrificial vessel into which 'flow' the pervasive forces of Śakti.

The polarity principle appears in yantra symbolism in a variety of forms. One of the most important is the bindu, in which the tension between the opposites is resolved. In the bindu the empirical and the transcendent merge into an indistinguishable unity. Expanded emblems of duality as male and female (considering the bindu as the contracted emblem) are a pair of interpenetrating triangles which form a star hexagon; or a figure formed by splitting the bindu into

two dots, one male and the other female. In linear form, the dualism is expressed as two intersecting lines. The *Kālīkā Purāṇa* explains this image in describing the Tripurā Yantra: 'The line that begins from the north-eastern region is called Śakti; [the one] going from the south-western region to the north-western region and then reaching the north-eastern region is called Śaṁbhu [Śiva]; one should cause the Śaṁbhu to intersect with the Śakti.'[17]

The concept of dualism permeates tantric symbolism. Even Sanskrit letters, which are inscribed on the yantras, are divided into male and female. Every consonant is articulated with a vowel, and the *Jñānārnava Tantra*[18] divides the symbolic properties of the Sanskrit alphabet into two: the vowels embody the feminine energy and the consonants the male principle. If it were not for the force and dynamism of Śakti represented by the vowels, all the letters (consonants as Śiva) would be inert as a corpse. Hence, for example, the 'force' of the mantric sound rooted in this conjunction of opposites. Only by the union of Śiva-Śakti can speech be articulated expressively.

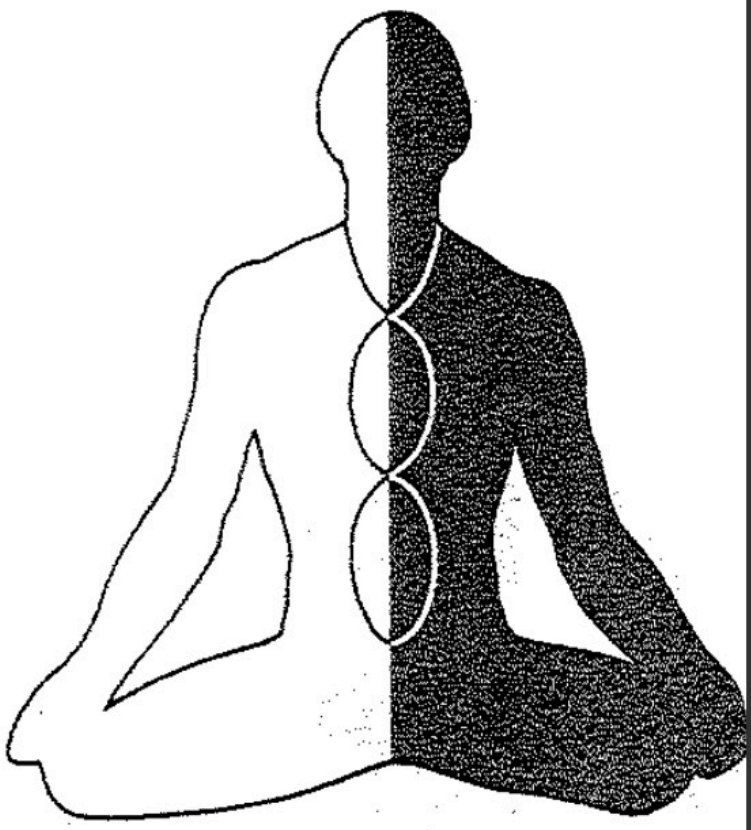
Conversely, in another text the Sanskrit consonants are referred to as yoni (Śakti) because they cause the formation of compound words known as bīja (seeds) with the vowels (Śiva).[19] For instance, in Krīṃ, the seed syllable of the goddess Kālī, two of the four sounds (K = Kālī, R = Śiva) denote the union of the two principles.

Since these two principles are inseparable and indispensable to the continuum of existence, Śākta yantras (yantras devoted to goddesses) implicitly express the 'Śiva element'. (In tantric philosophy the female principle, in addition to her own attributes, possesses all the attributes of Śiva.) Conversely, Śaiva yantras with their liṅga-yoni motifs are considered to possess an inherent Śakti nature.

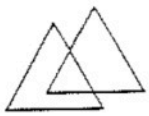
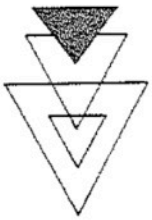
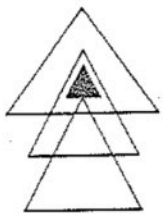
In the yantras devoted to Śakti-clusters, the goddesses as a group denote the dual principles. In the sixteen yantras of the cluster of Nityā Śaktis, who constitute the moon-phases, the *Kāmakalāvilāsa* (v. 17) states that 'the 15 Nityās represent the 15 lunar days and the lunar days are the union of Śiva-Śakti'.

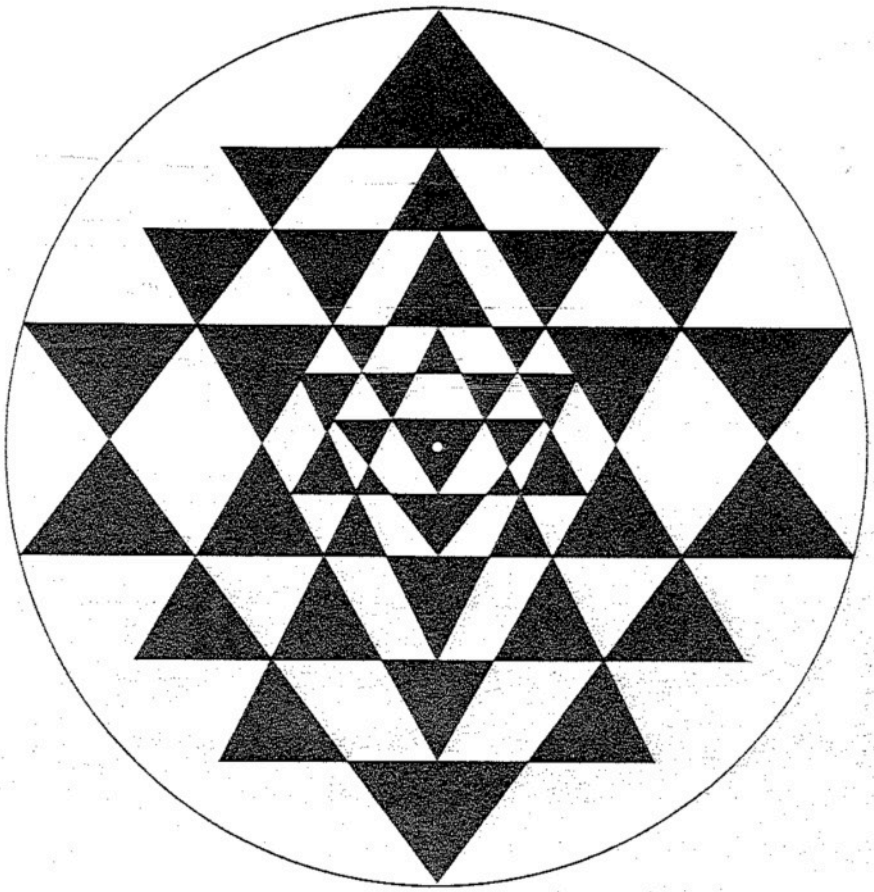
Tantric symbolism employs several images to illustrate the integration of the dual principles in the physiology of the subtle body. This duality is 'vertical' inasmuch as Śakti (energy) lies in latent form as Devī Kuṇḍalinī at the base of the spine, and Śiva in the highest spiritual centre, the Sahasrāra Chakra at the crown of the head, and 'horizontal' in the two psychic nerves in the subtle body: Iḍā, the lunar or female channel, on the left side of the body, and Piṅgalā, the solar or male channel, on the right side. The subtle body thus appears as an amalgam of paradoxical energies. From this theory follows the entire discipline of tantric sādhanā, which consists in unifying these opposite forces. The vital energies circulating in Iḍā and Piṅgalā are unified in the central Sushumṇā nerve; the union of Kuṇḍalinī Śakti with Śiva takes place in the chakras at their various levels in the subtle body, until their final union in the highest centre, the Sahasrāra Chakra.

One of the most striking representations of Śiva-Śakti biunity, and at the same time, the most spectacular abstraction of yogic vision, is the Śrī Yantra.



Biunity expressed in the subtle body, through the two psychic channels, Iḍā (female) on the left and Piṅgalā (male) on the right.

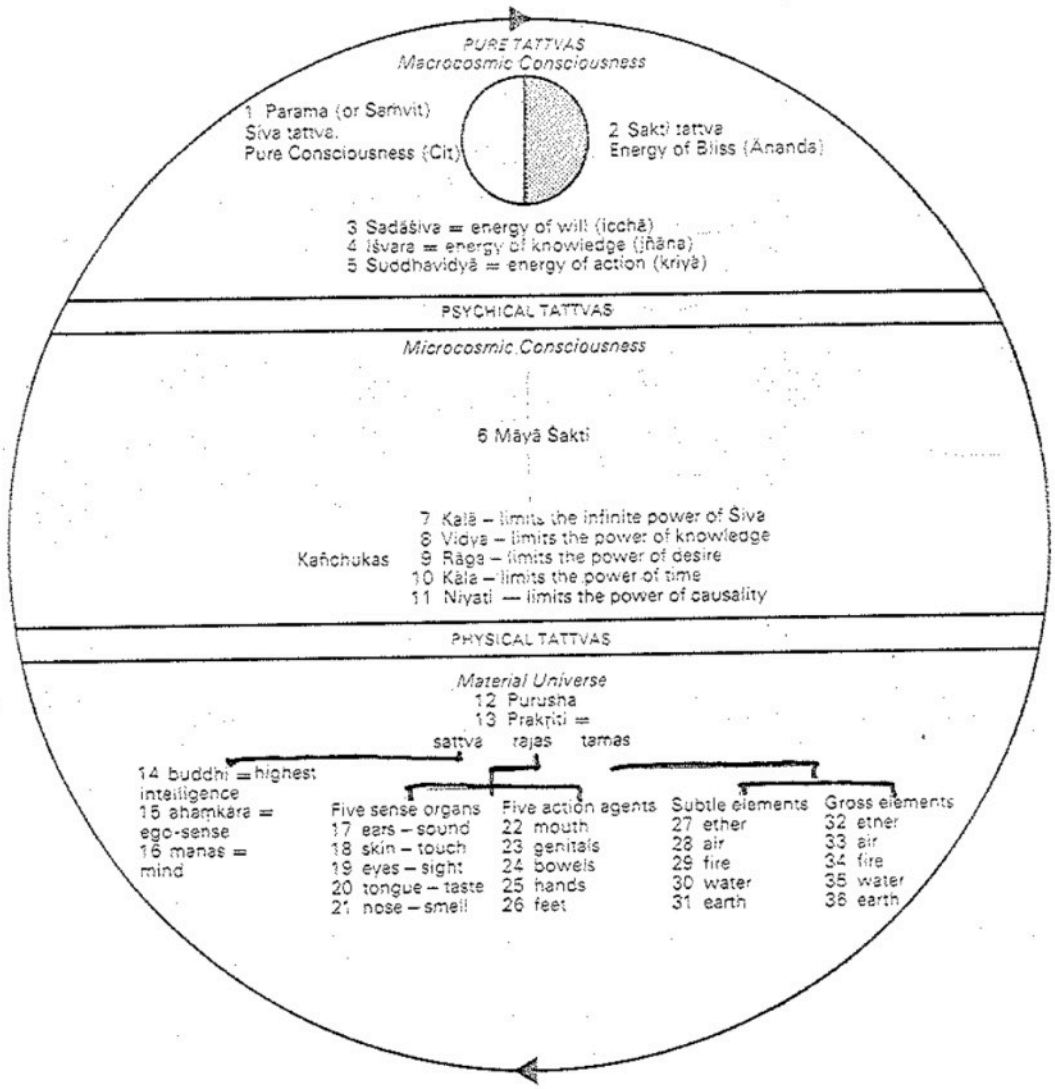
Metaphysics of evolution	Yantra symbol	Description
1 The universe in its unmanifested form, in the void ↓		Mahā bindu, the great seed point
	Unity	
2 Śiva's potential power, Śakti, activizes the quiescent state		The splitting of the bindu by the force of cosmic desire
3 Modification of original unity in the two principles Śiva/Śakti, the two in ONE.		Bindu splits. Visarga-maṇḍala
4 Transformation of original unity		Mūla-trikoṇa, the root triangle as the cosmic womb, representing cosmic triads
	Duality	
5 Expansion, doubling and development, by the integration of the male and female principles		Śiva (prakāśa) and Śakti (vimarśa) dividing to create the root principles of life. A stage of creation which begins to give rise to psychical tattvas (kañchukas) which obscure our perception of original wholeness
	Multiplicity	
6 Creation of tattvas, cosmic categories, by external projection that gives rise to the world of diversity	 	Mūla-prakṛiti, primordial nature, projecting its 24 gross tattvas of the material universe. The five Śakti triangles (left) represent all the fivefold categories, such as the five elements, five organs of action and five sense organs The four Śiva triangles representing individual consciousness that is obscured by the creative play of Māyā Śakti
		↑ Involution, or process of return to Unity
	Nāda or Cosmic Sound, symbol of Śiva	Bindu, symbol of Śakti



The fully created cosmos (sṛiṣṭi) arising from the union of male and female principles, in which the world of multiplicity is held by the unity of the primordial bindu at the centre. Each triangle of this yantra has its presiding deity. Many epithets of the Supreme Energy, such as Adyā Nityā, Ṣoḍaśī, Lalitā, and Tripurā-Sundarī, are invoked as the central divinity in this yantra, known as the Śrī Yantra

quasi-biological emission (visarga) of the cosmos. But at this stage the 'pair' is still structurally indivisible: even though two, it forms a single unit.

The intense impulse of procreation in which Śiva-Śakti join to produce the bindu, the primordial seed of the universe, has sometimes been equated with the human sexual impulse. The 'sexual' aspect of Śiva-Śakti should not be over-emphasized, and in the creative act we must not see a divine coupling, but the unfolding of cosmic principles that produce two forces, matter and anti-matter, changeless Śiva (Cit Saṁvit) and changing power (Cit Śakti) full of light (prakāśa) and power (vimarśa), and giving rise to sound (nāda) and material force (mūla-prakṛiti, or kalā). It is a gross misconception to view the Śrī Yantra as an erotic symbol.

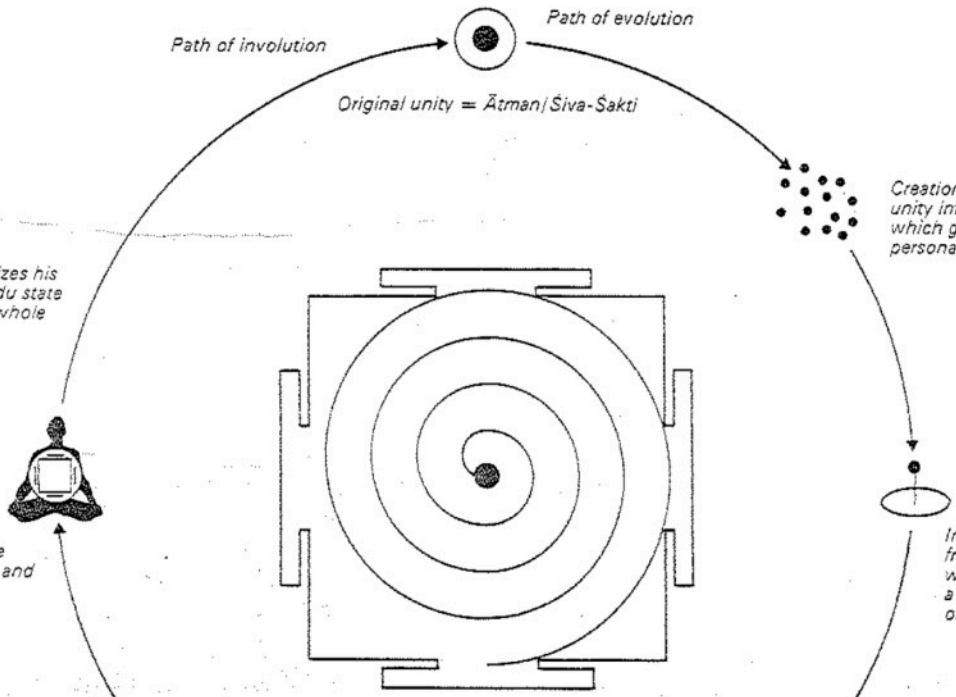


The tattva diagram above summarizes the tantric vision of the scheme of cosmic evolution involution which forms the metaphysical basis of the symbolism of the Śrī Yantra.

The universe is composed of 36 cosmic principles (tattvas) unfolding from primal unity, called Parama Śiva (or Saṁvit). The first two of the 5 pure or subtle tattvas consist of Śiva as Consciousness in union with his Śakti or Energy of Bliss (graphically represented in the yantra as the bindu). The following 3 pure tattvas are Śiva Śakti's threefold energies: of will (= Sadāśiva); of knowledge (= Īśvara); and of action (= Śuddhavidyā) which are the prime movers of cosmic evolution (symbolized in the three points of the primordial triangle). At this stage, there is no experience of division or diversity. Everything is merged in the unity of Śiva/Śakti.

The next unfolding is the stage of psychical tattvas which go to make up the human soul. The original unity of Śiva/Śakti begins to modify itself towards differentiation. This development implies limitation of the limitless pure tattvas. Māyā Śakti, the first tattva of the psychical stage, obscures the primordial unity of the earlier stage by means of 5 tattvas which are each a type of limitation (the kañchukas): The omnipresence of Śiva Śakti is limited by the kañchuka of kalā (part or fraction) which gives rise to the notion of individuality; the omniscience of Śiva/Śakti is limited by the kañchuka of vidyā (knowledge) and gives rise to our ignorance of reality; the wholeness of Śiva-Śakti is limited by the kañchuka of rāga (attachment, desire) and gives rise to discontent; the eternality of Śiva/Śakti is limited by the kañchuka of kāla (time) and gives rise to mortality; the omnipotence of Śiva/Śakti is restricted by the kañchuka of Niyati (fate, predestination) and conditions us to the round of life. Like a husk that envelops a seed, these six psychical limitations veil and obscure our perception of reality.

Up to this stage of creation, everything is harnessed in unity. Now evolution bifurcates into subject and object, when all division and opposites appear. At the next level, Śiva tattva transforms as Puruṣha tattva, or the Primordial Male Principle. Puruṣha retains his absolute substance but appears limited under the spell of Māyā. In contrast to Puruṣha who represents every sentient person – the innermost focal point of the subjective self, limited by conditions imposed by creation – the



The dynamics of psyche and symbol. This process should be seen in relation to the dynamics of cosmic evolution and involution (see diagram on facing page)

The adept seeks through sādhanā to heal the split, in this case with the aid of yantras and related disciplines. The yantra symbols become a link between man/cosmos

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Prakṛiti tattva, the Female Principle, is the embodiment of the kinetic quality and constitutes the objective manifestations of nature. Prakṛiti, consisting of three guṇas: sattva (quality of radiance, intelligence), rajas (kinetic quality), and tamas (inertia), differentiates into a state of buddhi, or highest intelligence, and ahaṃkāra, a state of consciousness of self (aham = ego).

The homogeneity of pure creation is torn asunder in this stage, when matter dominates spirit and gives rise to the world of multiplicity. The gross categories of nature are grouped in clusters of 5 tattvas: the 5 sense organs, the 5 action agents, the 5 subtle and the 5 gross elements, which together constitute the objective universe, whereas the mind (manas), the receiving agent of impressions, is the 'subject'. The fiveloidness of material nature provides the basis of the symbolism of the Kālī Yantra and the 5 Śakti triangles of the Śrī Yantra, and constitutes the world of matter.

Evolution is not an end in itself. Everything evolves only to return again to source. At the end of the cosmic cycle all these categories will be withdrawn once more into the primordial unity of the pure tattvas. It follows that there is fundamental identity between man, cosmos and yantra symbol

with Ātman. The phenomenal ego shatters our perception of our inner wholeness, and makes us see life as an accumulation of disjointed images. The real self lies hidden, veiled by the limiting factors (kañchukas) which like sheaths hide the luminosity of Ātman and obscure from us our inner unity with the cosmos. The purpose of the tantric quest and the goal of ritual and meditation (Chapters 4 and 5) is the gradual realization of the real self, so that the play of the phenomenal ego yields to the inner wholeness of Ātman, as the sādhaka retraces his steps from the outward-directed world of multiplicity to the inward focus of unity.

Return to the centre

Involution is a compulsion into the spiritual. It implies moving against the current of life. In subjective terms it means thirsting for a higher state of consciousness, suppressing the 'lower' by ascending the ladder of multiplicity into unity, a spiritual itinerary which takes the form of a return to the state of cosmic foetalization, the *a priori* state before experience begins. Such a return shifts the centre of the personality from a fragmented awareness of his ego-centric consciousness to cosmo-centric wholeness, and brings about the union of the individual and cosmic consciousness (Śiva-Śakti). It means a death of the profane self, the perishable phenomenal ego, and a rebirth to an eternal, deathless state of being. The entire discipline of yantra-ritual and meditation is directed towards this single goal, a return to the Supreme Centre. The yantra makes the process of involution conscious to the adept.

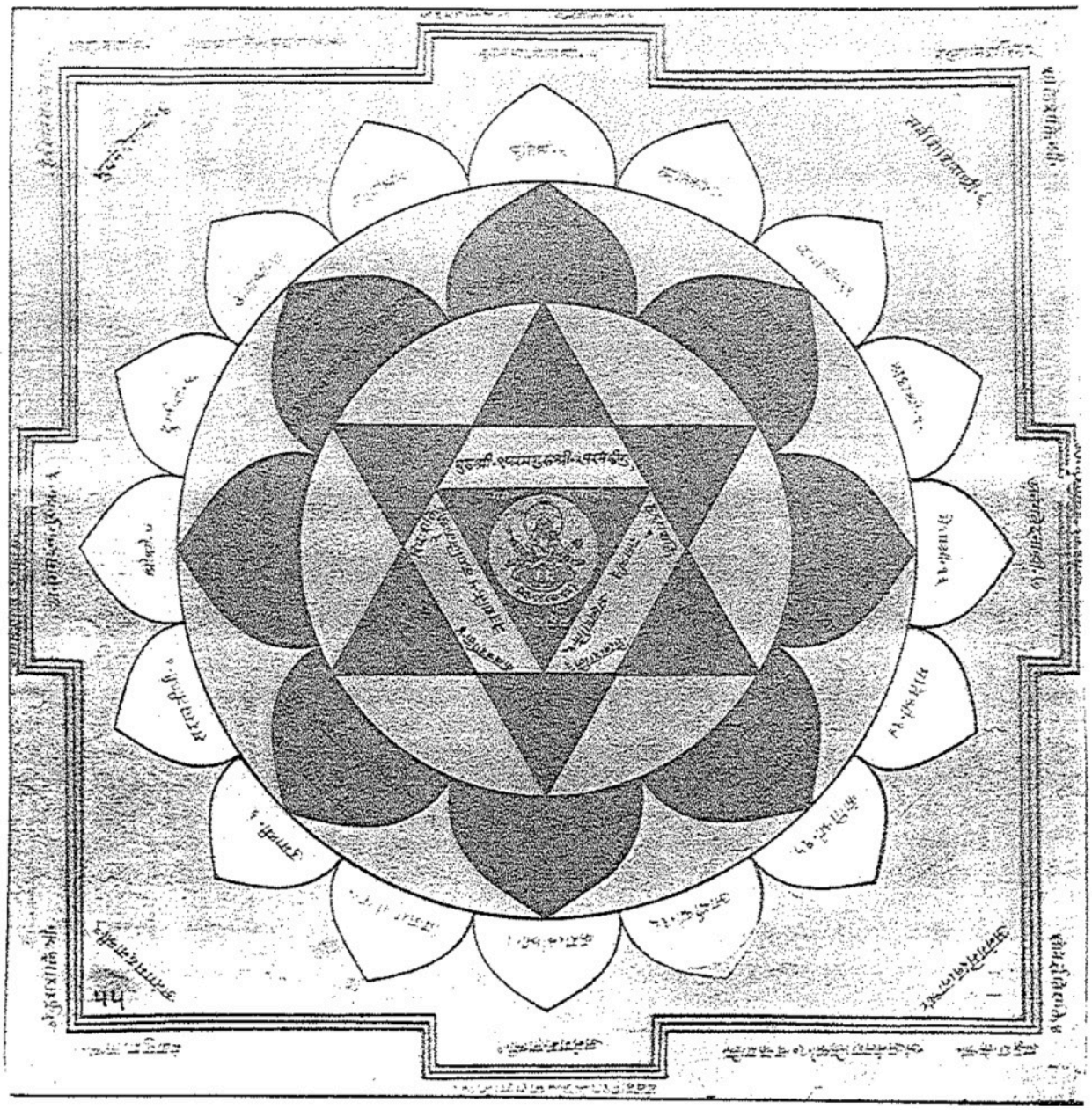
The hierarchical planes of the cosmos are depicted in the yantra as successive concentric figures, 'ascending' from the periphery to the centre, or in pyramidal yantras, from lower levels to higher, and up to the summit. The journey from periphery to centre is known as the involution mode, or the 'dissolving' way (laya-krama). (Conversely, the interpretation of yantras as symbols of cosmogony is outwards from the bindu, and is known as the evolution mode, or sṛiṣṭi-krama.)

A yantra thus maps the road of eternal return, and the way to inner wholeness. Escaping from the web of Māyā, the adept gradually rediscovers his eternal being through the yantra's symbols. When he has internalized all the symbols of the cosmos and his body 'becomes the yantra', the adept is no longer alienated from the truth that the symbol illustrates, but is transformed into the truth he seeks.

28 Śrī Chakra-patra. Yantra of Vishṇu as Hari-Nārāyaṇa with his consort Lakshmī. The inscription on the yantra states that it was given by a king named Varadarājaya to his daughter the princess at her marriage, for her worship to ensure her welfare and protection. The symbols repeated many times around the centre square represent the nine planets. Symbolically these serve to protect the cosmic energy of the deities invoked in the centre. Tamil Nadu, c. 16th century. Copper plate, 38 × 38 in.

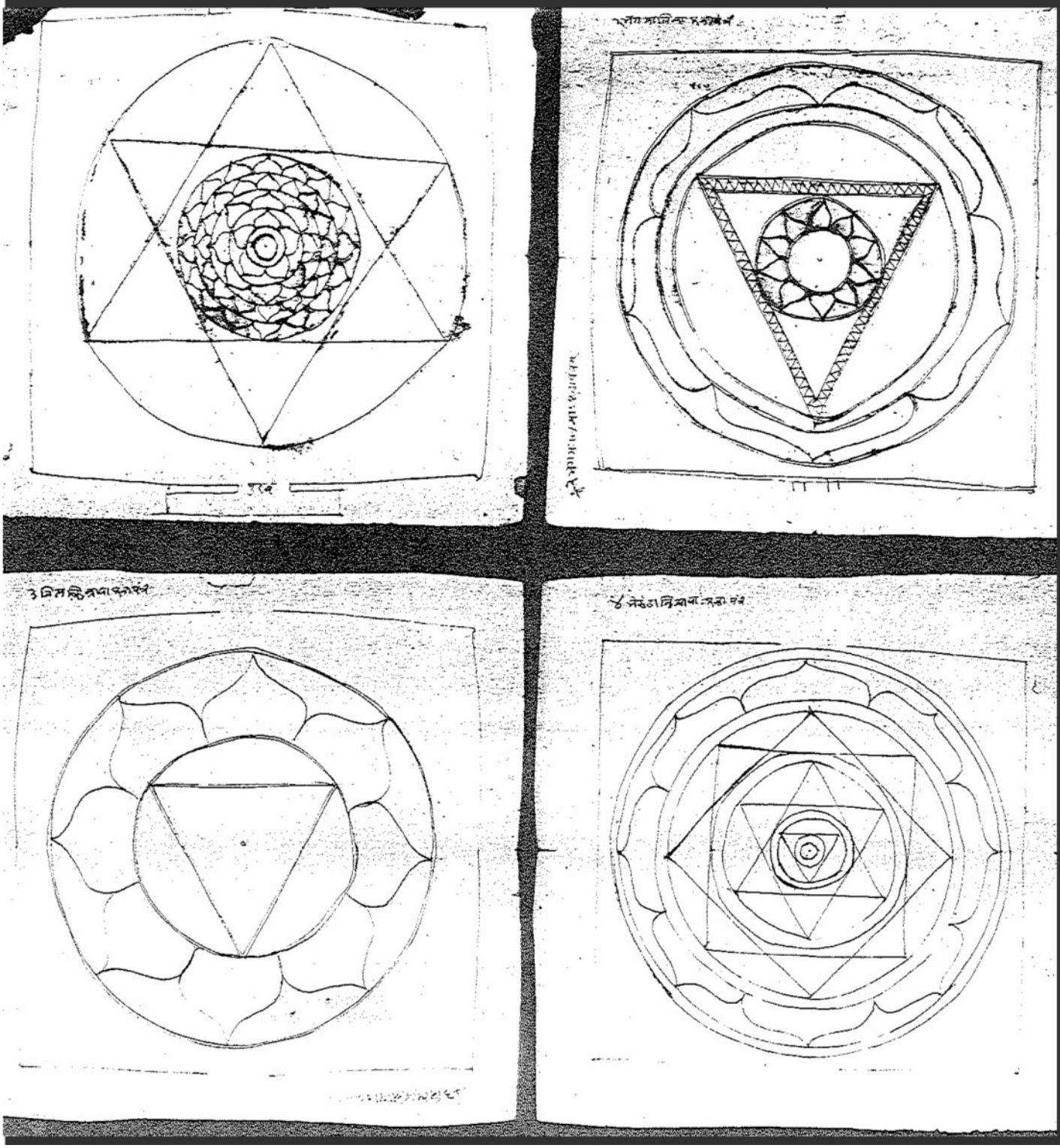
29, 30 Kṛishṇa, eighth incarnation of Vishṇu and chief divinity of Hindu devotionalism, in his iconic and yantra forms. As the Supreme Being and eternal lover, Kṛishṇa attracts the human soul to its ultimate surrender. In his yantra the seed mantra Klīṃ symbolizes his eternal aspect of love. Orissa, 18th century. Bronze

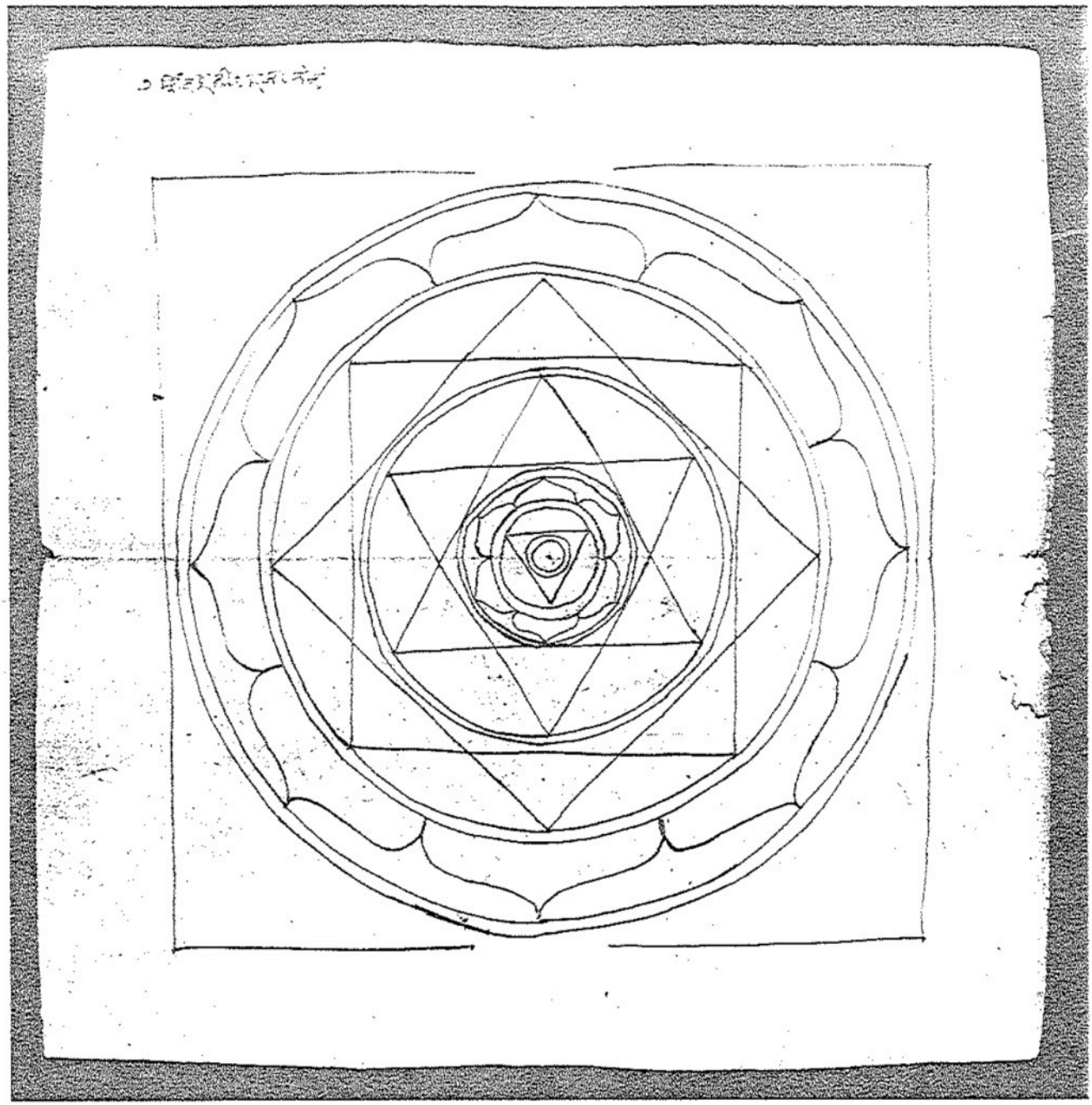
31, 32 Rādhā, Kṛishṇa's power of delight (Hlādini-śakti), in human shape and as her auspicious yantra. Bengal. 18th century. Brass



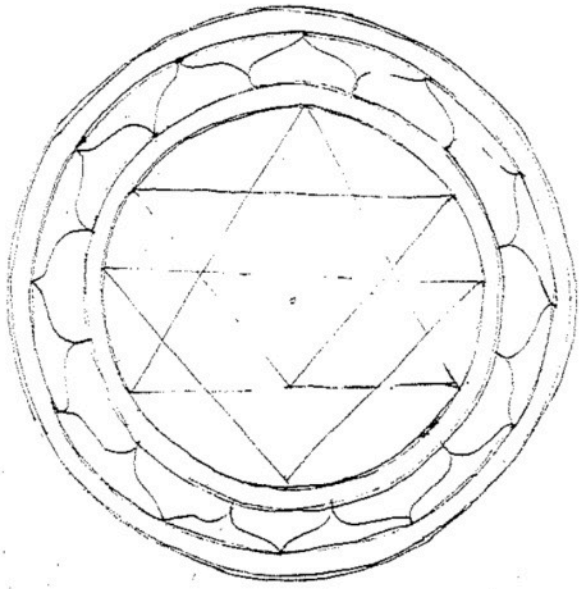
33 Yantra of the Mahāvidyā Bhuvaneśvarī, fourth of the ten aspects of the great goddess Kālī. The goddess who presides at the centre of her yantra is approached during ritual worship by means of the mantras of her surrounding deities. Correctly chanted, these mantras bring about progessive transformations in the psychic state of the sādhaka (see pp. 102–5). Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper

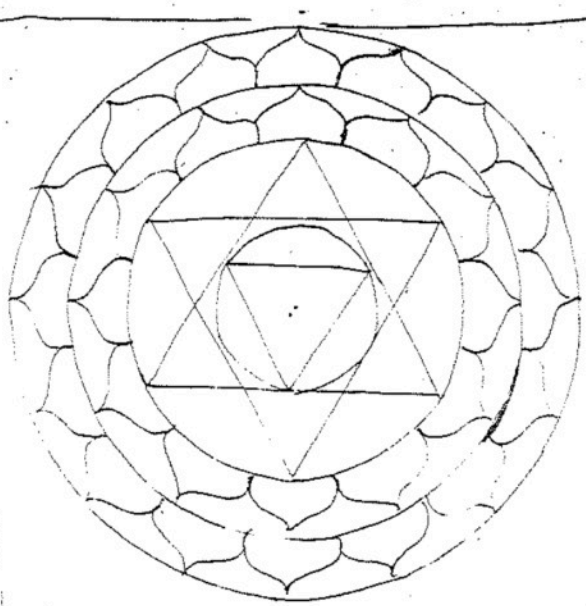
34–37 The sixteen lunar goddesses, the Nityā Śaktis, together provide a model of Cosmic Time, understood by Indian thought as cyclical. Four deities of lunar phases during the bright half of the month are (from the top, left to right) Kāmeśvarī Nityā, Bhagamālinī Nityā, Nityāklinna Nityā and Bheruṇḍā Nityā. Rajasthan, c. 19th century. Ink on paper

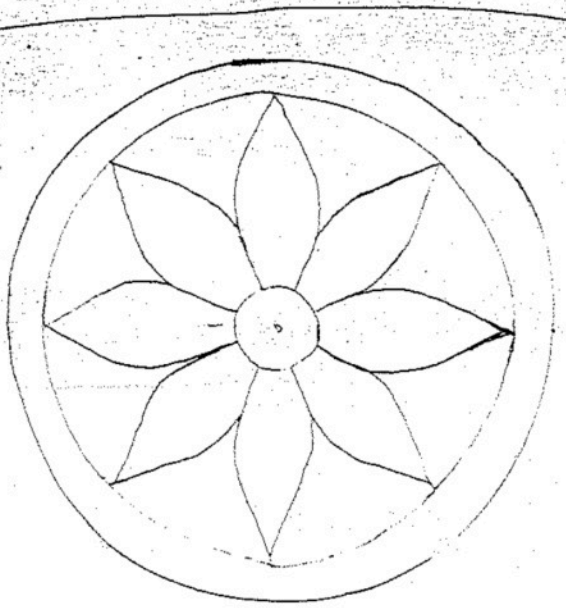


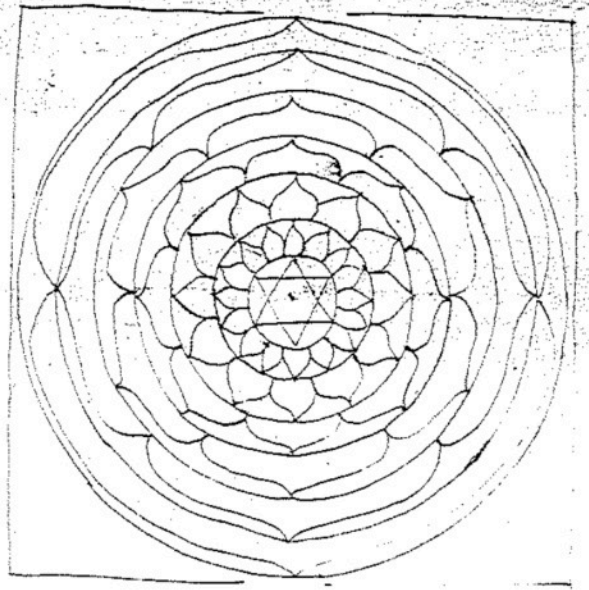


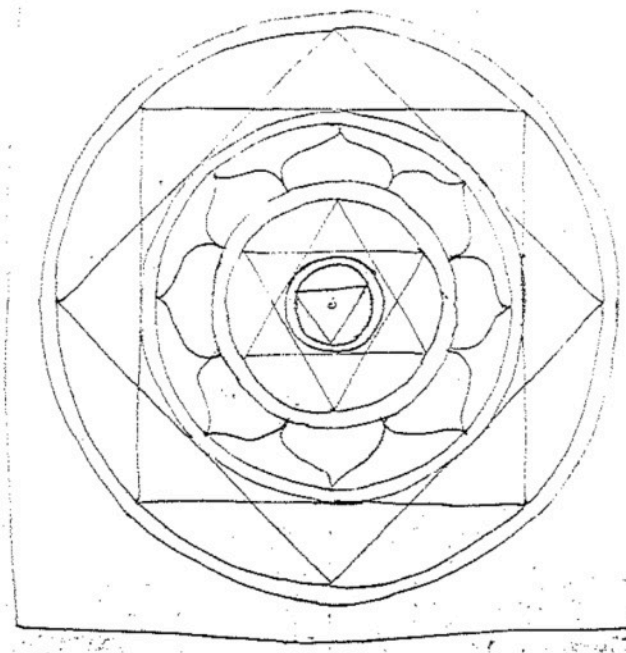
38–42 Each Nityā Śakti is a partial yet complete manifestation of cosmic energy: the partial aspects symbolized by the elemental forms of each yantra, the universal by the circle which encloses them all, like the moon, never losing its completeness. Above, a yantra of a single moon phase, Śivadūtī Nityā; opposite, yantras of Vahnivāsinī Nityā, Mahāvajreśvarī Nityā, Tvaritā Nityā and Nityā-Nityā. Rajasthan, c. 19th century. Ink on paper

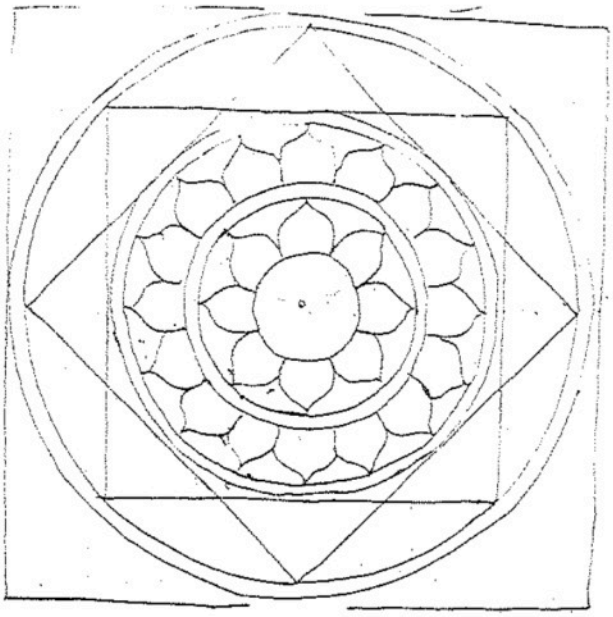


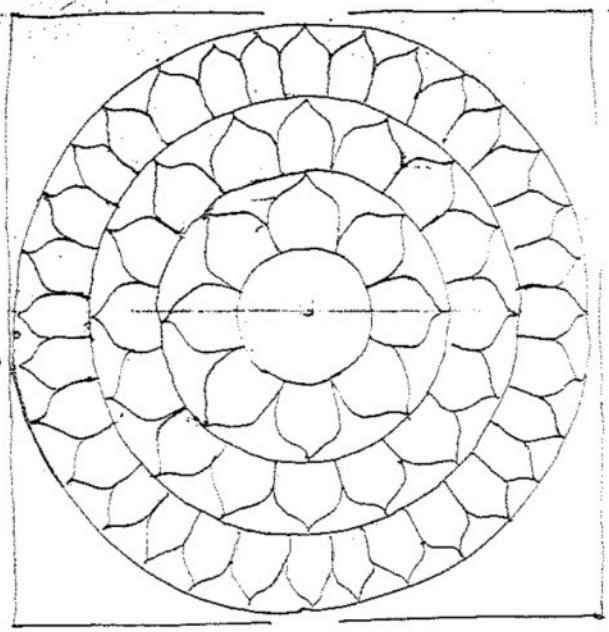


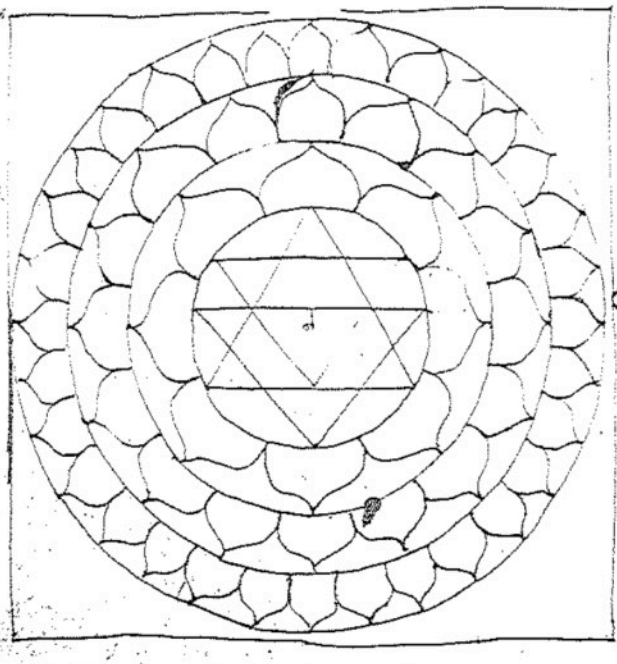


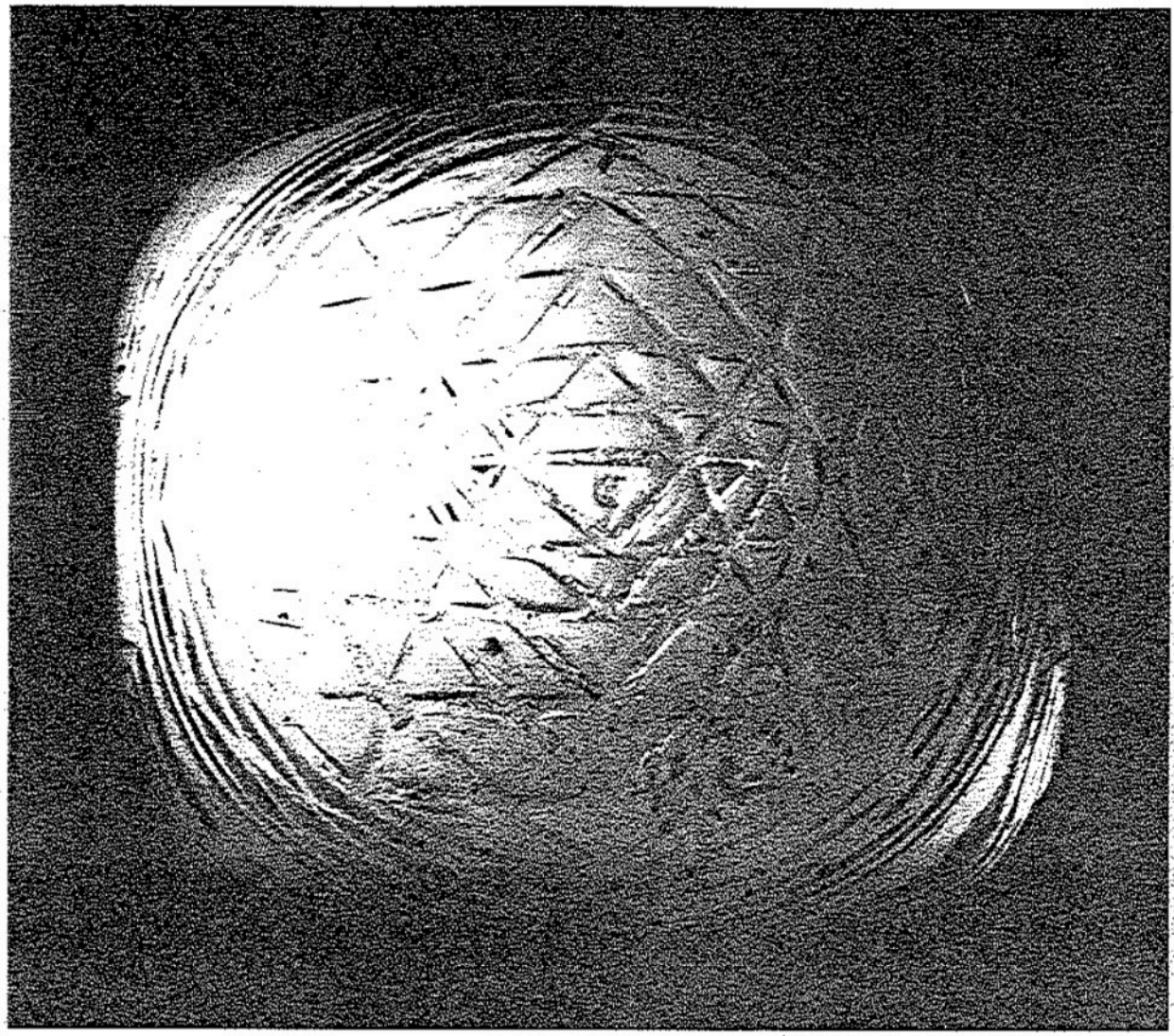






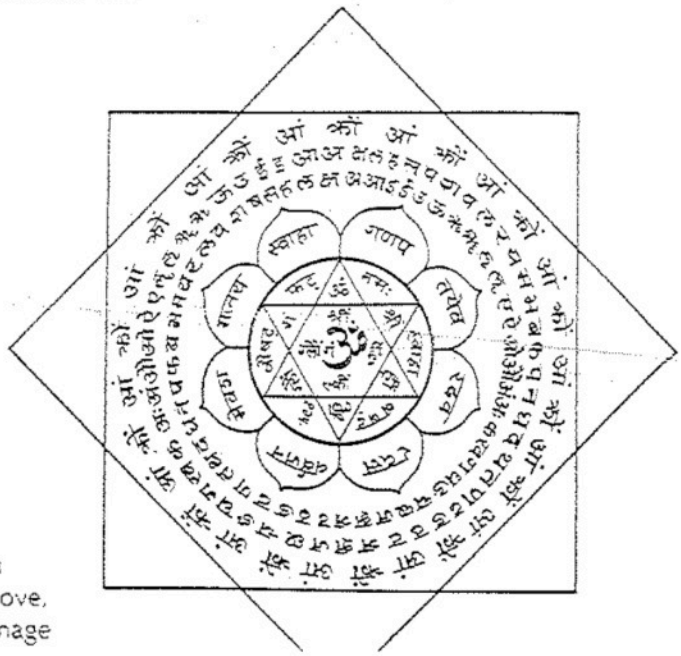




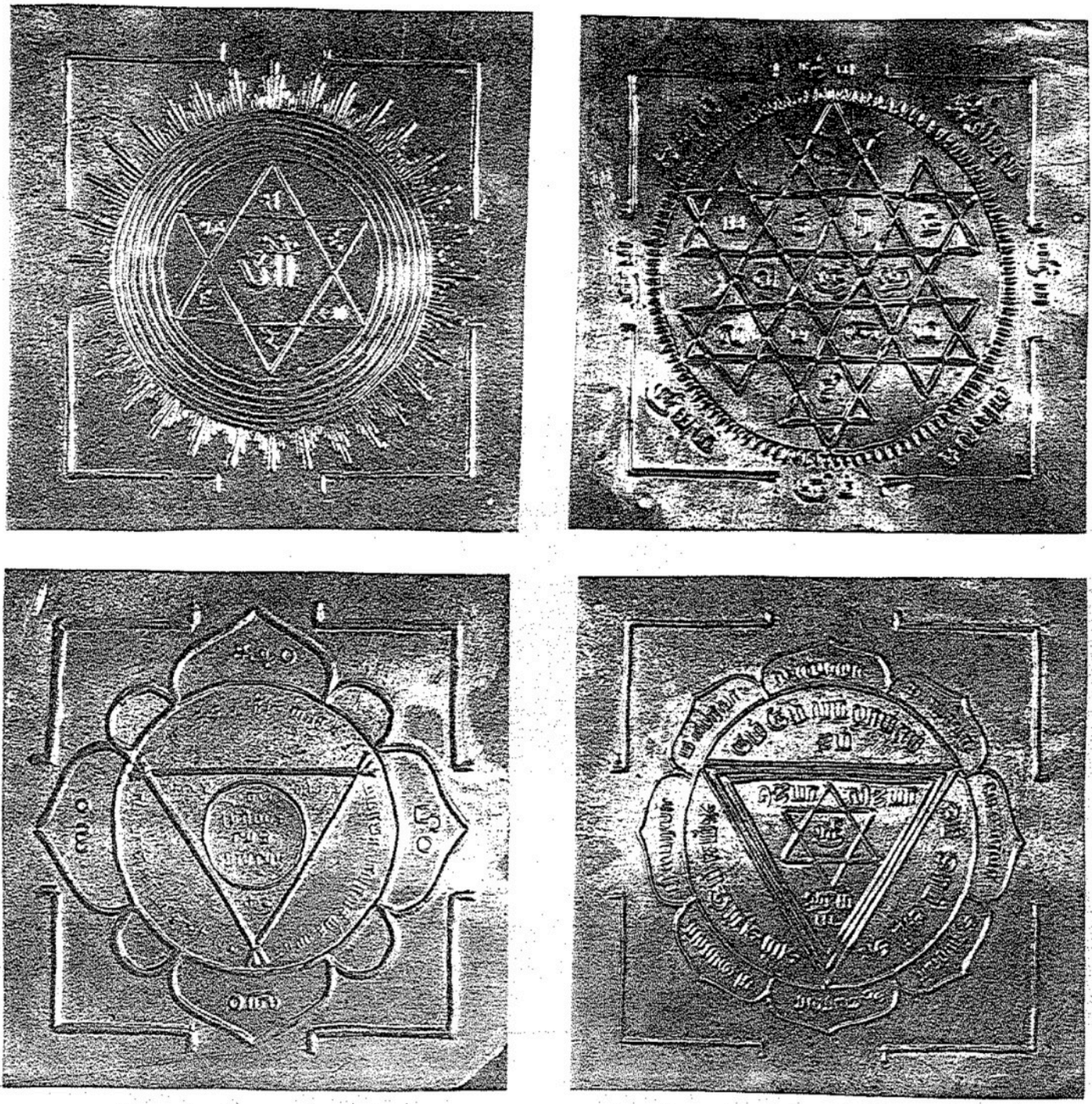


43–46 Goddesses of the concluding phases of the lunar cycle: Nilpatakā Nityā, Vijayā Nityā, Sarvamaṅgalā Nityā and Chitrā Nityā. The last is Ādyā Nityā, worshipped in the Śrī Yantra (see p. 73). Rajasthan, c. 19th century. Ink on paper

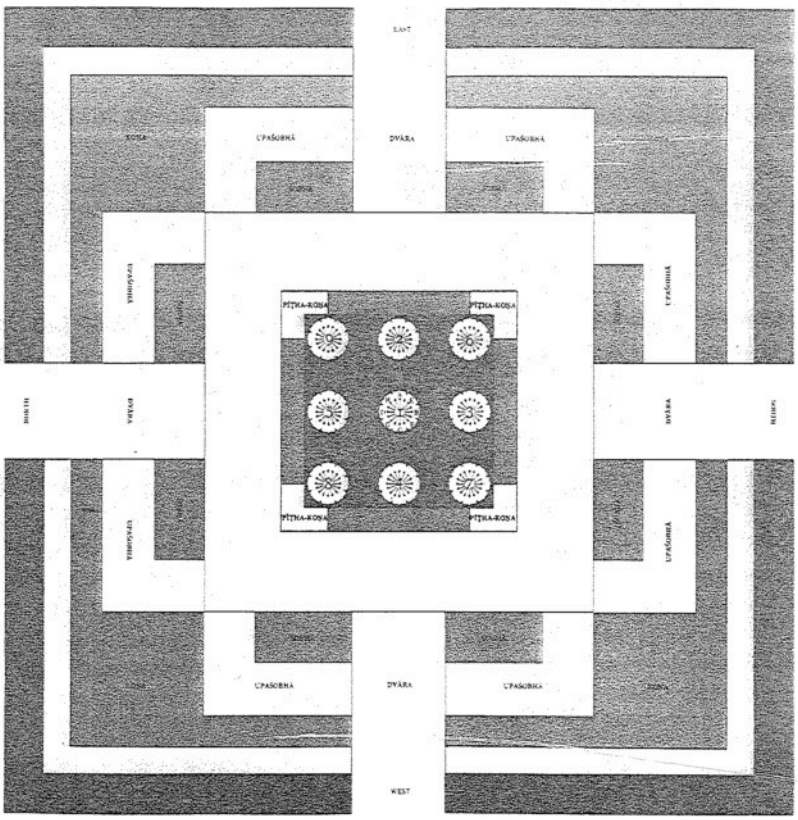
47 Śrī Yantra, image of the evolution of the cosmos. Viewed from the centre, the bindu, outwards to the periphery, each of the nine circuits of the yantra represents a stage in the unfolding which gives birth to the apparently separate entities of the manifested world. The substance, rock crystal, on which this yantra is incised, is itself symbolic: its translucent substance is believed to contain every colour, as the yantra embraces the totality of creation. Viewed in the opposite direction, from the periphery to the centre, known as the involution mode, the Śrī Yantra is a tool of ritual worship, enabling the sādhaka to intuit the One and to rediscover his original wholeness. Nepal, c. 1700



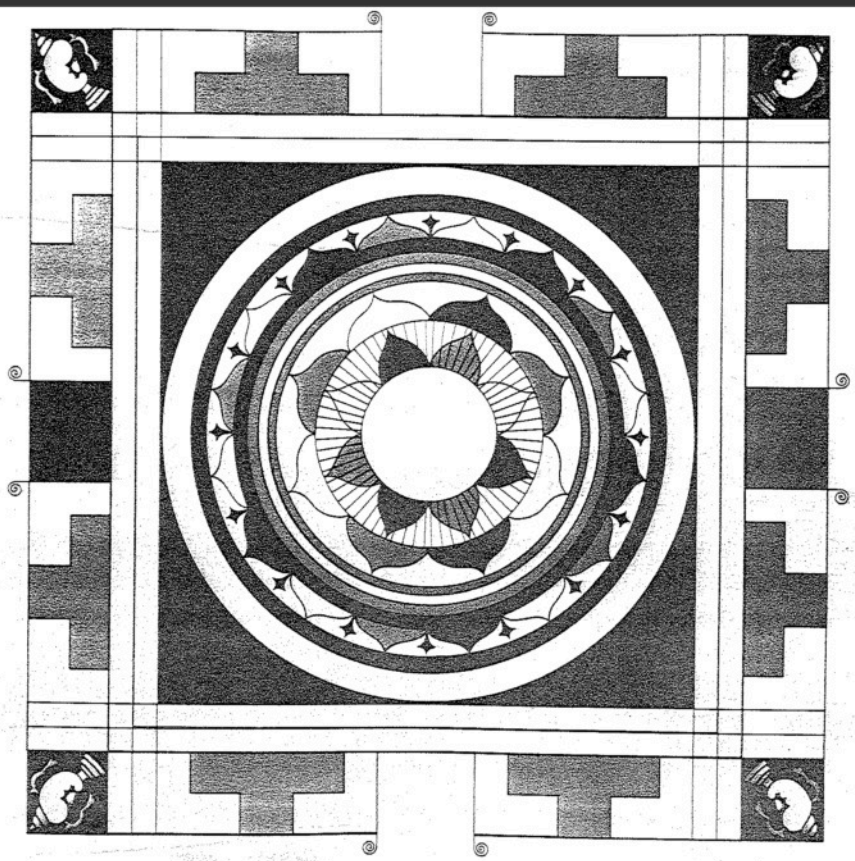
48, 49 Yantras of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, honoured as a symbol of good luck and wisdom, and as a dispeller of obstacles. Above, his iconic yantra embossed on copper (Tamil Nadu, contemporary image based on traditional forms). Right, his abstract yantra inscribed with mantras. Contemporary image



50–53 Yantras embossed on small copper plates, to be used in ritual worship. From top left to bottom right: Sudarshana Yantra, symbolizing Vishṇu's power and radiance; Vishṇu and Lakshmī Yantra symbolizing the unity of the male and female principles; yantra of Vishṇu, the preserver of the cosmos; and Kāla Bhairava Chakra, an auspicious yantra of one of the epithets of Śiva. Tamil Nadu, contemporary images based on traditional forms



54 Navapadma (nine lotus) Maṇḍala, a tantric yantra devoted to the worship of Vishṇu. The nine lotuses in the centre are the seats of Vishṇu's nine epithets. The square forms are characteristic of tantric Vaishṇava yantras used by the sect of Pañcarātras. Contemporary diagram based on traditional form

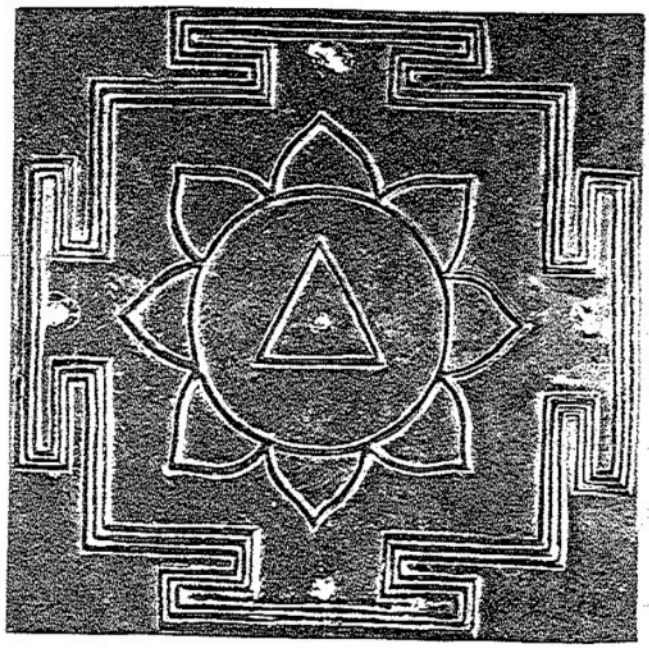


55 Chakrābja Maṇḍala, a yantra made up of circuits of lotuses, which is used in tantric initiation ceremonies. South India, contemporary diagram based on traditional form

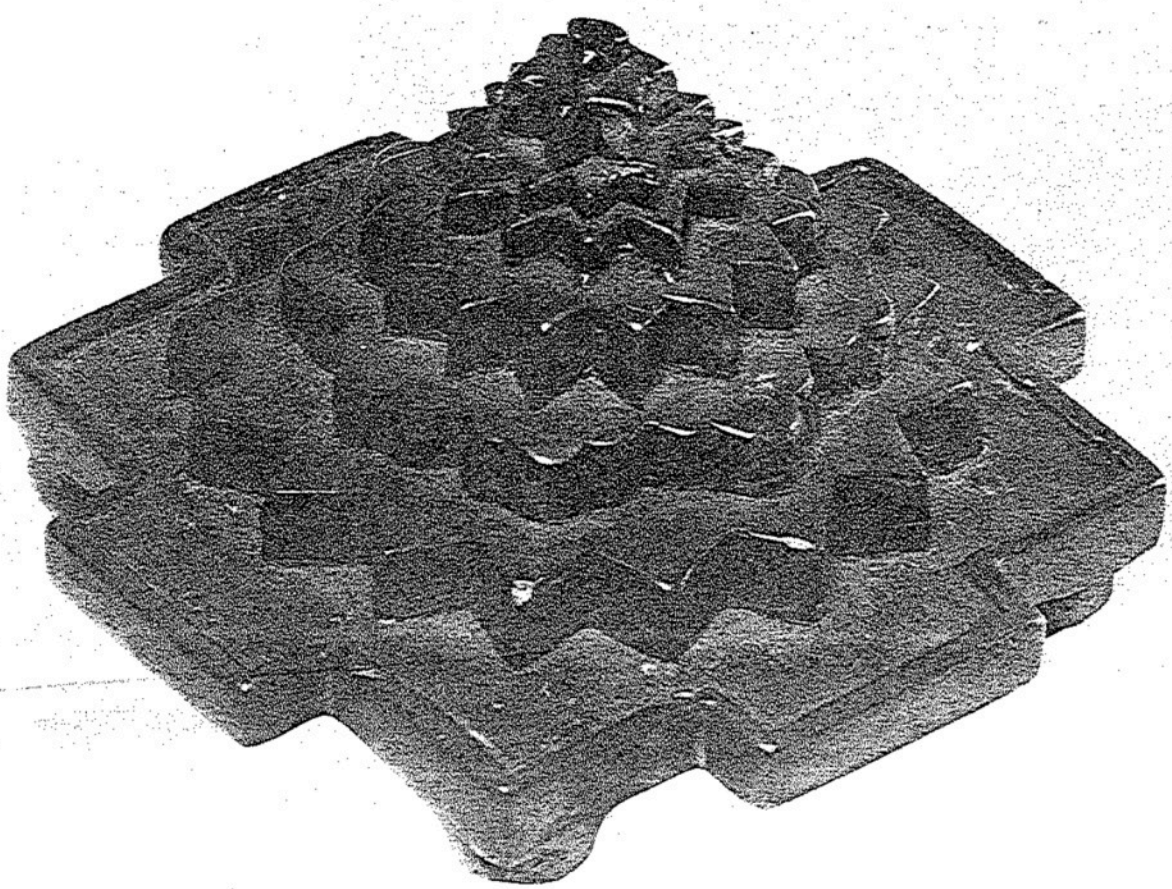
गुप्तयोगिनी गुप्तयोगी ॥ अनंगकुसुमा
अनंगकुसुमः ॥ अनंगमेखला अनंगमे
खलः ॥ अनंगमदना अनंगमदनः ॥
अनंगमदनातुरा अनंगमदनातुरः ॥
अनंगरेखा अनंगरेखः ॥ अनंगवेगिनी
अनंगवेगः ॥ अनंगांकुशा अनंगांकुशः
॥ अनंगमालिनी अनंगमाली ॥ सर्वसं
क्षोभणचक्रस्वामिनी सर्वसंक्षोभणचक्र
स्वामी ॥ गुप्ततरयोगिनी गुप्ततरयोगी ॥
सर्वसंक्षोभणी सर्वसंक्षोभणः ॥ सर्वविद्रा
वणी सर्वविद्रावणः ॥ सर्वाकर्षणी सर्वाक
र्षणः ॥ सर्वाल्हादिनी सर्वाल्हादनः ॥
सर्वसंमोहनी सर्वसंमोहनः ॥ सर्वस्तंभनी
सर्वस्तंभनः ॥ सर्वजृंभणी सर्वजृंभणः ॥
सर्ववशंकरी सर्ववशंकरः ॥ सर्वरंजनी
सर्वरंजनः ॥ सर्वोन्मादनी सर्वोन्मादनः ॥
सर्वार्थसाधनी सर्वार्थसाधनः ॥ सर्वसंप
त्तिपूरणी सर्वसंपत्तिपूरणः ॥ [illegible]
॥ सर्वमंत्रमयी सर्वमंत्रमयः ॥ सर्वद्वंद्व
क्षयंकरी सर्वद्वंद्वक्षयंकरः ॥ सर्वसौभाग्य
दायकचक्रस्वामिनी सर्वसौभाग्यदायकच
क्रस्वामी ॥ संप्रदाययोगिनी संप्रदाययो
गी ॥ सर्वसिद्धिप्रदा सर्वसिद्धिप्रदः ॥ स
र्वसंपत्प्रदा सर्वसंपत्प्रदः ॥ सर्वप्रियंकरी
सर्वप्रियंकरः ॥ सर्वमंगलकारिणी सर्वम
गलकारी ॥ सर्वकामप्रदा सर्वकामप्रदः ॥
सर्वदुःखविमोचनी सर्वदुःखविमोचनः ॥
सर्वमृत्युप्रशमनी सर्वमृत्युप्रशमनः ॥
सर्वविघ्ननिवारिणी सर्वविघ्ननिवारणः ॥
सर्वांगसुंदरी सर्वांगसुंदरः ॥ सर्वसौभाग्य
दायिनी सर्वसौभाग्यदायी ॥ सर्वार्थसाध

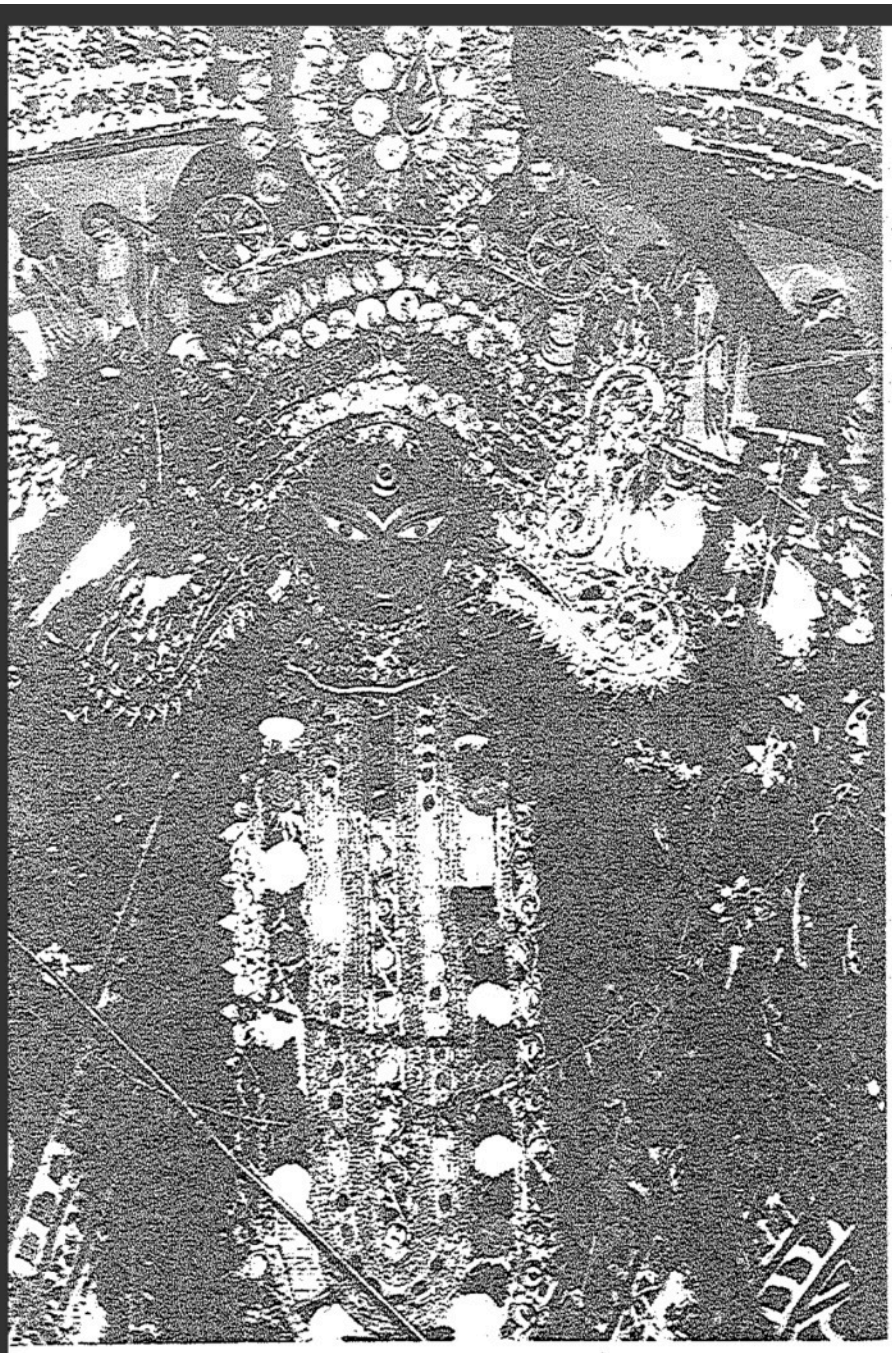
कचक्रस्वामिनी सर्वार्थसाधकचक्रस्वामी ॥
कुलोत्तीर्णयोगिनी कुलोत्तीर्णयोगी ॥
सर्वज्ञा सर्वज्ञः ॥ सर्वशक्तिः सर्वशक्तः ॥
सर्वैश्वर्यप्रदा सर्वैश्वर्यप्रदः ॥ सर्वज्ञानम
यी सर्वज्ञानमयः ॥ सर्वव्याधिविनाशिनी
सर्वव्याधिविनाशनः ॥ सर्वाधारस्वरूपा
सर्वाधारस्वरूपः ॥ सर्वपापहरा सर्वपाप
हरः ॥ सर्वानंदमयी सर्वानंदमयः ॥
सर्वरक्षास्वरूपिणी सर्वरक्षास्वरूपी ॥
सर्वेप्सितफलप्रदा सर्वेप्सितफलप्रदः ॥
सर्वरक्षाकरचक्रस्वामिनी सर्वरक्षाकरचक्र
स्वामी ॥ निगर्भयोगिनी निगर्भयोगी ॥

56, 57 Scroll (left) with mantras for Śrī Yantra pūjā (ritual worship, normally performed daily). The correct rhythmic chanting of these yantras energizes the static pattern of the Śrī Yantra (below). South India, c. 17th century. Copper

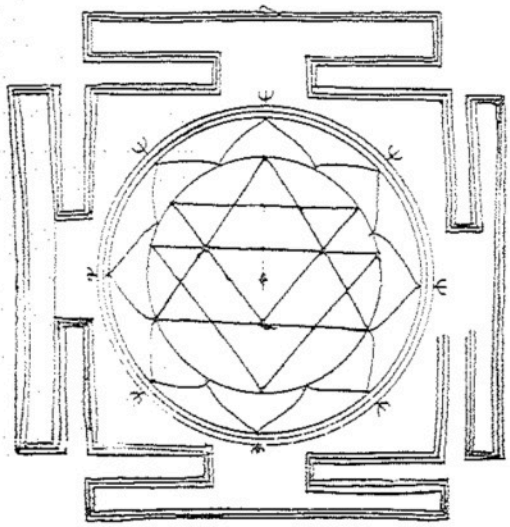


58, 59 Yantra of the Mahāvidyā Tārā (left) bearing the marks of sandal paste and red powder used in pūjā (South India, c. 18th century. Copper plate). The Meru form of the Śrī Yantra (below), in contrast, is generally used for meditation. Its pyramidal form of nine levels represents the sādhaka's steps of ascent from the world of matter to the highest spiritual level, the summit/bindu. Rajasthan, 18th century. Bronze





60, 61 The magnificent traditional image of the goddess Durgā, with her yantra, a bold contrast in expression. Yet image and yantra are 'sparks of the same fire', and in worship are interchangeable. Clay figure, 20 feet high, West Bengal; yantra based on the tantric work *Tantrasāra*. Rajasthan, 19th century. Ink on paper



4

Dynamics of Yantra: Ritual

The practices of ritual and meditation involve an internalization and externalization of symbols by means of parallel activities, the one inward and the other outward. This constant interplay of inner and outer constitutes the dynamics of yantra. For it is held that the energy (śakti) of the power diagram remains inert until it is activized and made meaningful through sacred activity. It is through ritual that power descends into the yantra and man is able to begin his ascent into a higher realm of being.

'There can be no sādhanā in an unreal world by an unreal sādhaka of an unreal lord.'[1] This statement implies that the god or goddess must be known as a 'presence' – visibly through the yantra, audibly through the mantric chants – and that the sādhaka must try to achieve an inner experience of the divinity. The sādhaka must ritually purify and prepare both himself and the yantra lest the deity he wishes to invoke in the yantra remains a stranger to him.

Ritual initiation

Initiation is the first major existential experience which prepares the sādhaka for the return to his inner centre and maps his journey towards integration with the cosmos. It is through the rite of initiation that he learns the nature and use of the yantra-mantra complex and begins to grasp the inner meanings of its signs and symbols.

Traditionally, the ceremonies of initiation mark a passage from one world to another. The rite is not simply a static event but is a dynamic transforming experience of the whole being, a second or 'true' birth, which conditions the sādhaka towards the primordial sources. Elaborate ceremonies are conducted to bring about 'death' and 'rebirth' which are understood as taking place literally. Some Tantras[2] list as many as twenty-five different types of initiation which last for many days and form a complete yoga sequence. The simplest form of initiation consists of mantra initiation (mantra-dīkshā) performed by a guru. Yantras generally play an important part in initiation ceremonies; and among the Śāktas, for example, initiation may be performed with the aid of the Śrī Yantra. In the simplest form of ceremony, the guru initiates the disciple in three stages: first he touches the disciple (sparśa-dīkshā) concentrating deeply on Devī; then he looks at the disciple with love and grace (ḍrik-dīkshā); finally, he imparts to him the words of knowledge and introduces to him the esoteric techniques of Chakra-pūjā (ritual worship of the chakras or circuits of the Śrī Yantra). This is followed by the recitation of the hundred-syllable mantra of the Devī and the offering of flowers to the Śrī Yantra.

Some initiatory rites are quite elaborate, like the one described in the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* (x, 109–97), followed by the Kaulas, or 'left-hand' tantrikas. This rite, known as pūrṇābhiṣeka, is performed with the five 'forbidden elements', wine, meat, fish,
72 cereals and intercourse, using the Sarvatobhadra Maṇḍala made on an earth altar with rice powder, and coloured yellow, red, black, white and dark blue. A jar is placed in the centre of the maṇḍala, and in an extended ceremony consisting of bodily purification, nyāsa, meditation and recitation of mantras, the five ingredients are offered on the jar symbolically. Finally, the guru imparts the mantra to the disciple and gives him a new name. Then the disciple worships his tutelary deity on the maṇḍala. Such rites may take one day, or three or five or seven or nine days, with a special yantra for each day.

Among the tantric Vaishṇavites (Pañcarātra) also, initiation is performed with the aid of maṇḍalas. The *Lakshmī Tantra* gives an elaborate version of one such rite
55 which uses the Chakrābja Maṇḍala, divided into nine sections, each of which is named after one of the aspects of Vishṇu. After the initial phases of the ritual the adept is given a new name. For this, he is blindfolded and made to cast a flower on the Chakrābja Maṇḍala; according to the section where the flower has fallen, the disciple is named after one of Vishṇu's epithets. Another feature of this form of initiation is what is called the 'tattva-dīkshā', in which the guru prepares a thread made of three strands, each to represent one of the three qualities of material nature – sattva, rajas and tamas – and each with nine knots. These twenty-seven knots symbolically denote all the cosmic principles in the body of the sādhaka and are offered as oblation into the sacred fire, a ritual act to denote symbolically the 'death' of the old self which is accompanied by the birth of a new self open to the life of the spirit.

Irrespective of the method that is followed, it is through the ritual of initiation that the psychological transformation of the adept begins. The rites of initiation bring a complete renewal of the sādhaka and equip him to carry out the various practices of yantra sādhanā.

The prāṇapratiṣṭhā ceremony

Just as the sādhaka is ritually transformed by the rites of initiation, so the yantra has to undergo a complete ritual transformation in order to be accessible for worship. One of the most important rituals of yantra worship is the infusing of vital force (prāṇa) into the geometrical pattern of the yantra, called prāṇapratiṣṭhā. The goal is to cause the spiritual universe underlying myth and iconography to 'descend' into the yantra so that it becomes a radiant emblem and receptacle of cosmic power (śakti-rūpa), and conciousness (chaitanya), transforming into sacred archetypal space what is phenomenally no more than a mere design.

The transfer of power from the sādhaka to the yantra changes the nature of the diagram, and the consecration of profane space conversely elevates the sādhaka to realizing the inherent energy of the theophany, so that the yantra becomes a powerful means of contact between the sādhaka and the cosmos.

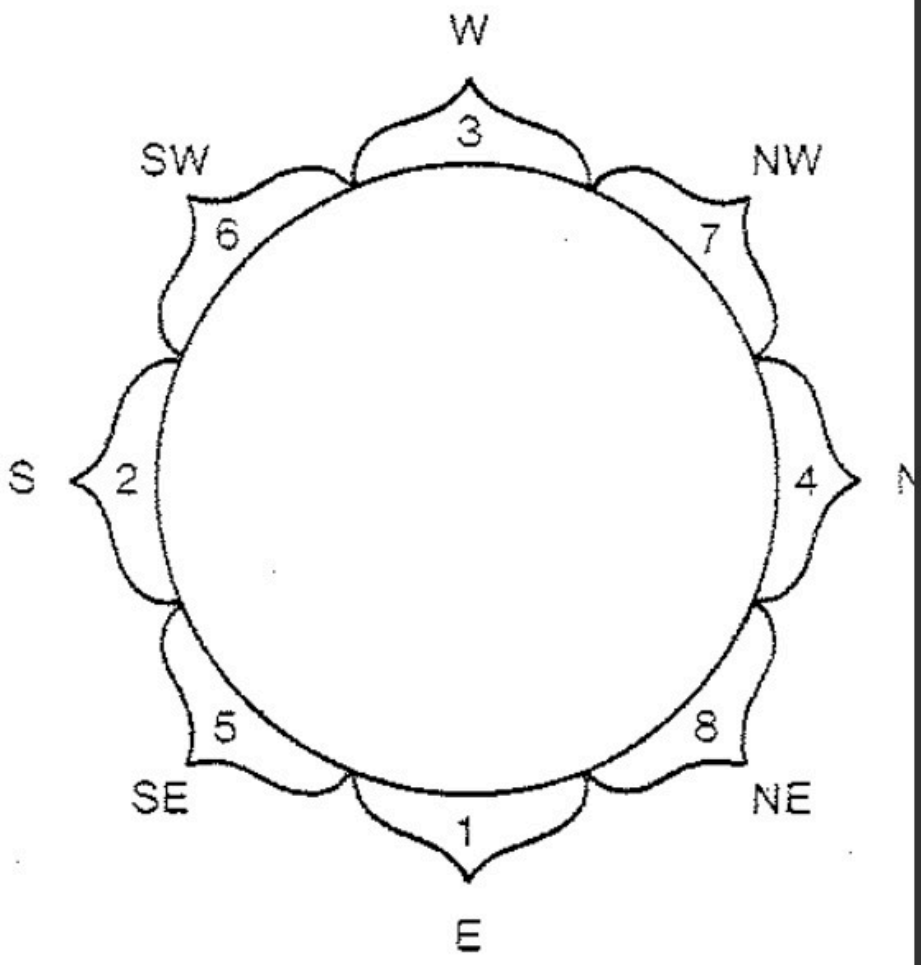
In the beginning of the ritual, the yantra which is to be made a living entity is ritually established (yantra sthāpanā) on a wooden pedestal. A maṇḍala is the seat on which the yantra will be consecrated, and it is purified by worshipping the specific divinities of the seat (pīṭha pūjā) and the four regents of space by chanting appropriate mantras. The yantra on its pedestal is then placed on a plate and put on the table, on the maṇḍala, for the ritual of prāṇapratiṣṭhā proper. To create a ritually pure archetypal space devoid of negative vibrations, the rite of expelling negative or evil forces (bhūtapāsaraṇa) is performed with a mantra. There follows another rite, known as 'fencing the quarters' (digbandhana), in which the sādhaka symbolically binds the four quarters of space by snapping his right thumb and middle finger ten times (8 points of the compass + nadir + zenith).

The sādhaka's body is next symbolically purified. It is through his purified body, in which the deity is present, that divine consciousness will be transmitted into the yantra to make it a living entity. The sādhaka's body is made infinitely radiant by means of the ritual of bhūtaśuddhi, in which the deification of the body is achieved by the symbolic dissolution of the five elements. Each element is dissolved by the chanting of mantras. The sādhaka then uses meditation to concentrate deeply on the deities, and performs the ritual of nyāsa, in which he touches various parts of his body while reciting mantras.

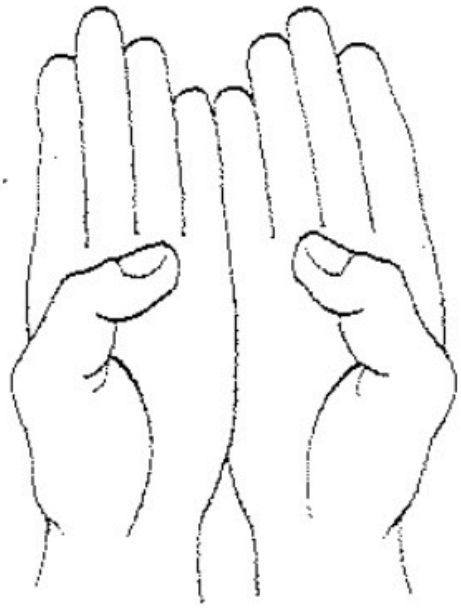
Through these rituals the sādhaka becomes an embodiment of conscious force and his body an epitome of divine energies. Thus 'purified' and 'cosmicized', he is considered an appropriate vehicle for the transference of power to the yantra.

This descent into the yantra can be achieved in several ways, but one of the chief methods is a breathing technique (prāṇāyāma). While the adept is in complete concentration, the devatā is exhaled by pranic transmission through the right nostril as he chants an appropriate mantra. He controls his breath, exhaling it over a red flower which he holds in his hand. The divine essence is thus communicated through the adept's body on to the flower. He then places the flower at the centre of the yantra which begins to be permeated with the spark of consciousness. The *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* (VI, 63–74) describes this process:

> Then, while making with both hands the 'tortoise mudrā' [finger gesture], let the worshipper take up with his hands a beautiful flower scented with sandal, fragrant aloes, and musk, and, carrying it to the lotus of his heart, let him meditate therein [in the lotus] upon the most supreme Ādyā.
>
> Then let him lead the Devī along the Sushumṇā Nāḍi, which is the highway of Brahman to the great Lotus of a thousand petals, and there make Her joyful. Then, bringing Her through his nostrils, let him place Her on the flower, [her presence being communicated] as it were, by one light to another, and place the flower on the Yantra. Then, uttering the bija [seed-mantra] Kṛīng, say the following: 'O Ādyā Devī Kālīkā! come here [into the yantra] with all Thy following, come here; [and then he says] stay here, stay here; [and then] place Thyself here; [and then] be Thou detained here. Accept my worship.'
>
> Having thus invoked [the Devī] into the Yantra, the Vital Airs of the Devī should be infused therein by the following *pratiṣṭhā mantra*:
>
> 'Āng, Hrīng, Krong, Shrīng, Svāhā, may the five Vital Airs of this Devatā be here; Āng, Hrīng, Krong, Shrīng, Svāhā, Her Jiva is here placed: Āng, Hrīng, Krong, Shrīng, Svāhā, all senses; Āng, Hrīng, Krong, Shrīng, Svāhā, speech, mind, sight, smell, hearing, touch, and



A lotus unfolding its petals towards the eight regions of the cosmos provides the sacred seat on which the yantra is consecrated for ritual worship



Āvāhana-mudrā, the gesture by which the divinity is brought to presence in the ritual of prāṇapratiṣṭhā

Haṃ to thee (Devī) in the form of Earth, I offer sandal paste.
Haṃ to thee (Devī) in the form of Ether, I offer flowers.
Yaṃ to thee (Devī) in the form of Air, I offer incense.
Raṃ to thee (Devī) in the form of Fire, I offer light.
Vaṃ to thee (Devī) in the form of Water, I offer food.

The five offerings also symbolize the devotee's senses which he surrenders: his ultimate aim is 'to become what he worships'.

At this point begins the Āvaraṇa pūjā, which is specific to yantra worship. The worshipper makes ritual offerings with the appropriate mantra to each of the enclosures, the physical containers of the Śaktis disposed on the yantra's lotus petals, circles, and angles, starting from the principal divinity placed in the centre, exactly as the universe is conceived as unfurling itself from the bindu. The Śrī Yantra is also worshipped in this way, starting with Devī Tripurā-Sundarī (Lalitā) in the bindu, then moving outwards to all the Śaktis successively until the outermost square is reached, whereupon the sādhaka involutes back to the centre for the final offering.

The Āvaraṇa pūjā proceeds in a clockwise direction, beginning from the east side of the yantra. This circular movement is meant to produce a sense of subjective rhythm, and to give a feeling of return to the source before the sādhaka moves on to the worship of the next circuit of the devatās.

33 The Āvaraṇa pūjā of the Mahāvidyā Bhuvaneśvarī (after the *Śrī-Bhuvaneśvarī-Nityārchana*), which is conducted on the nine enclosures of her yantra, illustrates on one hand the mantra/yantra synthesis, and on the other the symbolism of cosmic evolution/involution.

The mantras consist of seed syllables and the names of the deities, and are untranslatable. They exert their influence by their sound-vibrations.* They are meant to transmit, like music, their own meaning, as their sounds seep through our senses. As we have seen earlier, cosmos, deities and mantras are considered identical, therefore chanting of the name of the deities in tantric ritual is conducive to intuitive illumination and recapitulates a transcendental 'presence'.

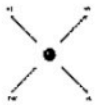
The rhythmic pattern of the reiteration of the mantras makes the static pattern kinetic, and infuses the yantra with a mobile linear force, capable of impinging on the senses for transformation.

First circuit: the bindu

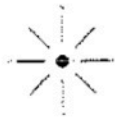
[The Goddess is invoked with Śiva in the bindu by chanting the following mantra]

Śriṃ hrīṃ Śrīṃ Amṛetaśvrśivasahita Śrī Bhuvaneśvar-yai namaḥ / śrī Amṛetaśvrśivasahita Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī
[followed by the major mantra, which is]
Śrī pādukāṃ pujyāmi namaḥ tarpyāmi namaḥ

[Protection is invoked around the bindu by chanting the names of the deities of the eight regents of space with mantras associated with parts of the body]



Āgneye [S E], Śrīṃ hrīṃ Śrīṃ hrāṃ hṛdyāya [heart] namaḥ hṛdyaśakti [followed by the major mantra, see above]
Nairṛtye [S W], śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ śirse [head] svāhā śira-śakti [followed by the major mantra]
Vāyavye [N W], śrīṃ hrīṃ śikhāyai vaṣaṭ sikhā [crown of the head] [followed by the major mantra]
Īśāne [N E], śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ hriaṃ kavacāya huṃ kavaca [followed by the major mantra]
[back to the centre] śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ hrauṃ netratrayāya [eyes] vauṣṭ netre traya [followed by the major mantra]
[around the centre] śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ astraya phaṭ astra [followed by the major mantra]
[back to the centre] śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ hṛllekhā [followed by the major mantra]



Purve [E], śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ aiṃ Caganā [followed by the major mantra] Dakṣiṇe [S], śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ auṃ Raktā [followed by the major mantra] Paśchime [W], śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ iṃ Karālikā [followed by the major mantra] Uttare [N], śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ āuṃ Mahocchuṣmā [followed by the major mantra]

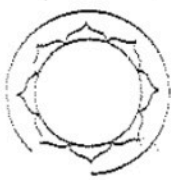
[Now is chanted the concluding root mantra in which the sādhaka beckons the Goddess of the first circuit to grant success and good fortune]

etāḥ prathamāvaraṇadevatāḥ sāṅgāḥ saparivāraḥ sāyudhāḥ saśaktikāḥ pūjitāstarpitāḥ santu namaḥ
Abhīṣṭsiddhiṃ me dehi śaraṇāgatavatsle bhaktyā samarpaye tubhyaṁ prathamāvaraṇ-ārchanaṃ

Second circuit: hexagon

[Invoking the devatās with their śaktis from the north triangle onwards]
Śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ Gayātrīsahita caturānana Brahmā / Savitrī sahit Viṣṇu / sarsvatīsahit Rudra / Lakshmīsahit Kuvera / Rati sahit Kāma / Puṣṭi sahit Vighanrāja [followed by the major mantra]
[on the sides of hexagon] Śaṇkhanidhi sahit Vasudhā / Padmanidhi sahit Vasumati / Gayatryādisahit Śrībhuvaneśvarī [followed by the major mantra] [Then are chanted the mantras associated with the parts of the body starting from the heart ending with eyes]
Hrāṃ hṛdayāya [heart] namaḥ / hrīṃ śirse [head] namaḥ / hruṃ śikhāyai [crown] namaḥ / hraiṃ kavacāya namaḥ / Hrauṃ netratrayāya [eyes] namaḥ / Hrḥ astrāya namaḥ [followed by the root mantra, as above but concluding dvitīyāvaraṇārchanaṃ = deities of the *second* (dvitīya) circuit]

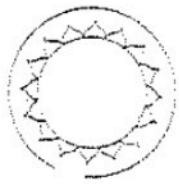
Third circuit:
eight-petalled lotus



[Invoking the deities on the petals] Anaṅgakusumā / Anaṅgakusumāturā / Anaṅga-mandanā / Anaṅgamadanāturā / Bhuvanapālā / Śrīgaganavegā / Śrīśśirekhā / Anaṅgavegā

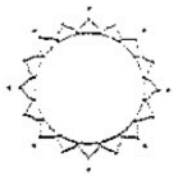
[followed by the major mantra after each name and finally the root mantra as above but concluding tritīvāvaraṇārchanaṃ = the deities of the *third* (tritīya) circuit]

Fourth circuit: sixteen-petalled lotus



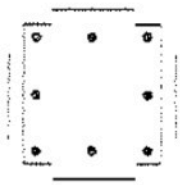
[Invoking the sixteen deities on the petals together with the major mantra] Śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ Karāiā / Vikrālā / Umā / Sarsvatī / Śrīṇ / Durgā / Uṣā / Lakshmī / Śruti / Smṛiti / Dhṛti / Śraddhā / Meghā / Rati / Kānti / Āryā [followed by the root mantra, concluding cathurāvaraṇārchanaṃ = deities of the *fourth* (cathurtha) circuit]

Fifth circuit: outside the sixteen petals invoking the eight Mātrikā Śaktis together with the major mantra



Śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ āṃ Brāhamyai namaḥ Brāhmī / Iṃ Māheśvryai namaḥ Maheśvarī / Uṃ Kaumāryai namaḥ Kaumārī / Ṛṃ Vaiṣṇavyai namaḥ Vaiṣṇavi / Lṛṃ Vārāhyai namaḥ Vārāhī / aiṃ Indrāṇyai namaḥ Indrāṇī / Āuṃ Chāmuṇḍāyai namaḥ Chāmuṇḍā / aḥ mahālakshmyai namaḥ Mahālakshmī [followed by the root mantra concluding pañcāvaraṇārchanaṃ = deities of the *fifth* (pañca) circuit]

Sixth circuit: inside the square invoking the deities with the major mantra



Śrīṃ hrīṃ Anaṅgarupā / Anaṅgamadaṅā / Anaṅgamadanāturā / Bhuvanavegā / Bhuvanapālikā / Sarvaśirā / Anaṅgavednā / Anaṅgamekhlā [followed by major mantra after each name and the root mantra concluding Ṣaṣṭhāvaraṇārchanaṃ = deities of the *sixth* (ṣaṣṭha) circuit]

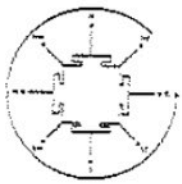
Seventh circuit: points of the outer periphery

[Invoking the deities of the eight regents of space, nadir and zenith with their respective seed mantras]

Śrīṃ hrīṃ Śrīṃ laṃ Indrāya [E] namaḥ / yaṃ Agni [SE] / yaṃ Yama [S] / Kṣhaṃ Nirṛti [SW] / Vaṃ Varuṇa [W] / Yaṃ Vāyu [NW] / Saṃ Soma [N] / Haṃ Īśāna [NE] / āṃ Brahmā [zenith] /

Hrīṃ Ananta [nadir] [followed by the major mantra after each deity, and finally the root mantra concluding, saptāvaraṇārchanaṃ = deities of the *seventh* (sapta) circuit]

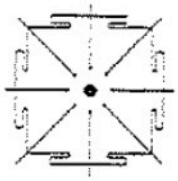
Eighth circuit:
outside the square enclosure



[Now the energies of the deities of the quarters who guard the sacred space of the yantra are invoked naming each of their emblems, which are symbols of their power and strength and display their eminence over the whole universe]

Śrīṃ hrīṃ śrīṃ vajra śakti [thunderbolt, E] / agni śakti [fire, SE] / daṇḍa śakti [staff, S] / khaḍga śakti [sword, SW] / Pāśa śakti [noose, W] / dhvaja śakti [flag, NW] / gadā śakti [goad, N] / Triśula śakti [trident, NE] / padma śakti [lotus, zenith] / chakra śakti [disc, nadir] [followed by the major mantra, and finally the root mantra concluding aṣṭamāvaraṇārchanaṃ = the deities of the *eighth* (aṣṭa) circuit]

Ninth circuit: back to
the bindu = involution



[The culmination of the Āvaraṇa pūjā is reached at the ninth enclosure when the sādhaka reverses the movement of the rite precisely as the universe involutes back to the centre, and invokes the protective divinities around the bindu followed by the major mantra]
Śrīm hrīṃ vaṃ vatuka [E] / yaṃ yoginī [N] / kṣhaṃ khetrapāla [W] / gaṃ gaṇapatī [S] / Vāyavye vāṃ aṣṭavasu [NW] / Īṣāne dvādaśāditya [NE] / āgneye ekādaśa rudra [SE] / nairṛtye sarvabhut [SW]
[Now the final offering is made thrice with a handful of flowers, perfumes, the waving of lights and chanting of the root mantra, concluding navāvaraṇārchanaṃ = deities of the *ninth* (nava) circuit, and inviting the Devī to bestow her grace with the hand-gesture of the yoni-mudrā.]

Next, the devotee will perform japa, the repetition of a mantra a specified number of times. In South India it is still common to recite the one thousand names of the Goddess (Lalitāsahasranāma) or to repeat the esoteric mantra of the Śrī Vidyā (see p. 42). This may be followed by meditation by the sādhaka on the chakras (internal yantras) of his subtle body (see Chapter 5).

At the end of pūjā, the yantra may be erased if it has been drawn for temporary worship, or the sādhaka may use his middle finger to make a dot between his eyebrows with the vermilion paste offered on the yantra.

Identity of psyche, symbol and cosmos through ritual

Visarjana

At the end of pūjā the yantra is symbolically forsaken in a rite known as visarjana – the dissolution of the yantra into the primordial plenitude (or whatever term may be used to indicate the Ultimate Ground of Being – archetypal space, Śakti, Brahman, etc.). Using a finger gesture (generally yoni-mudrā) and pronouncing the appropriate mantra, the adept dismisses the deity contained in the yantra. In certain forms of visarjana the deity is brought back into the adept's heart from where it was first installed into the yantra, either by the adept's inhaling his breath or smelling the flower through which the deity was first installed, during the prāṇapratiṣṭhā ceremony. The visarjana ceremony reverses the existential status of the yantra, so that what was earlier, at the start of the liturgy, a near-sacred archetype of the sacred reverts to the status of a diagram.

Yantra rituals follow one another as 'microcosmic enactment of the macrocosm'. The whole dynamic of ritual worship is analogous to the cyclical dynamics of cosmic time. The unity of 'cosmic time' which is divided into three phases in Indian tradition pp. 77–9) is perfectly identifiable with 'ritual time' in daily worship, which is also divided into three phases. The three phases of yantra liturgy – prāṇapratiṣṭhā or consecration, pūjā or worship and visarjana or ritual departure – succeed one another as a cosmogony and repeat the classical symbolism of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe.

Cosmos	*Yantra*	*Aspirant*
Creation	prāṇapratiṣṭhā = ritual birth	initiation = ritual birth
Preservation	pūjā or worship	sādhanā
Dissolution	visarjana	identity of microcosmic self with the macrocosm

Further, the triple cosmogonic motif is repeated on three levels: on the level of the visual motif (yantra); on the level of the aspirant, who like the cosmos and the symbol attains a new state of identity, a process which begins from the moment he is initiated in the theory and practice of yantra; and on the ontological plane. Hence psyche, symbol and cosmos are gathered into a single identity, as the symbol is assimilated into the body and the body into the cosmos, forming a circuit of cosmic unity.

5
Dynamics of Yantra: Meditation

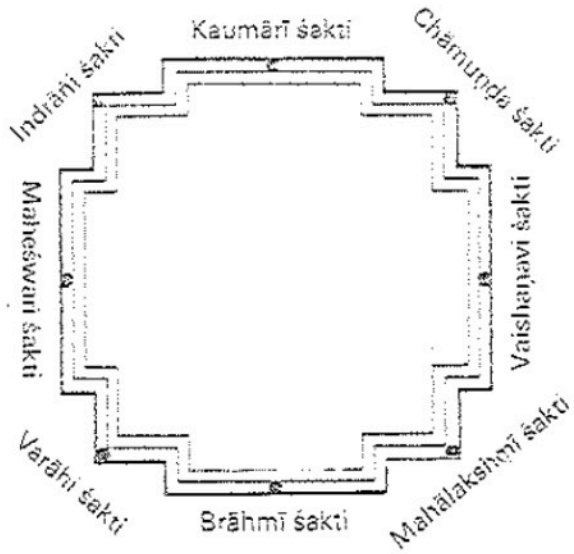
Ritual is an introductory phase of spiritual discipline, but not the main and most significant element. Outer worship gradually gives way to an inner form of contemplation which leads the sādhaka through stages of spiritual unfolding, proceeding from the gross to the subtle levels of consciousness. As he passes from stage to stage his worship becomes more and more contemplative in character, and the visual aids which he uses become progressively simpler. In the earliest stages of yantra meditation he may use the yantra to visualize the iconic images of devatās; at the highest stage of all, the yantra is condensed into an imaginary bindu; and at the last, even the primal point disappears and the sādhaka and object of contemplation are one. The internalization of symbols as they become subtler is supported by the dynamics of the yantra until a culmination is reached when man, symbol and cosmos are united.

Yantra meditation is usually combined with the classical techniques of yoga meditation, which begin with the adept gaining perfect control over his mind by censoring the riot of mental impressions, sensations and memory associations which make up ordinary consciousness to achieve a mental state of lucidity and centration. Patanjali (c. 200 BC), originator of the classical yoga system, recognized the importance of external symbols as aids to achieving the mental state of ekāgratā, or single-pointed concentration: 'Concentration may be attained by fixing the mind upon any divine form or symbol that appeals to one as good.'[1] He further declared that the object in question can be of any size, from the 'atomic to infinitely great'.

Yantras provide a powerful tool for the preliminary centring of consciousness, but yantra meditation should not be understood superficially, as though attention were merely pegged on to a symbol, as for instance when we focus on any symmetrical figure to control our mental flux. On the contrary, genuine yantra meditation produces an active mental state and induces receptivity to symbolic revelations. Yantra meditation proper begins when the yogi has mastered the traditional bodily disciplines, such as energizing of the body by means of yogic postures (āsana) and regulating the breathing to a steady rhythm (prāṇāyāma).

Deity meditation

In one type of meditation iconic image and yantra are meditated on simultaneously. Each part of the iconographic image of the devatā is built up progressively during intense visualization. A verse dedicated to the goddess Triputa (an epithet of the



1 Trailokyamohana chakra

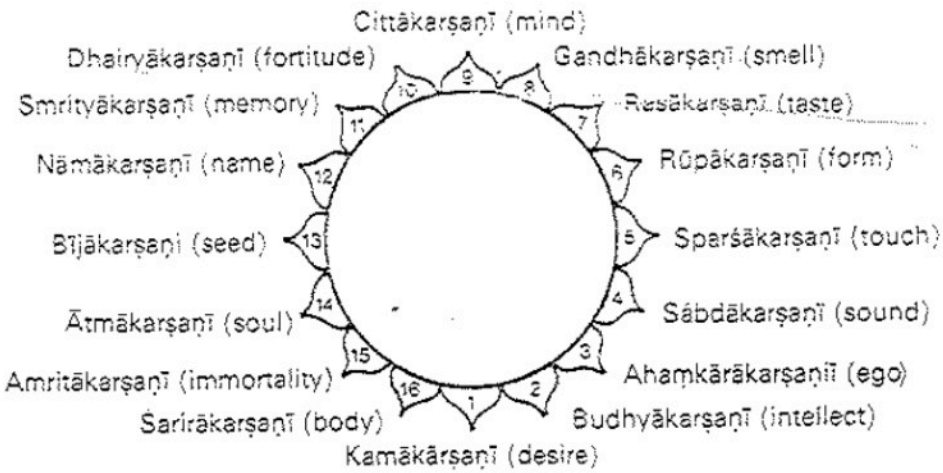
2 Sarvāśaparipuraka chakra

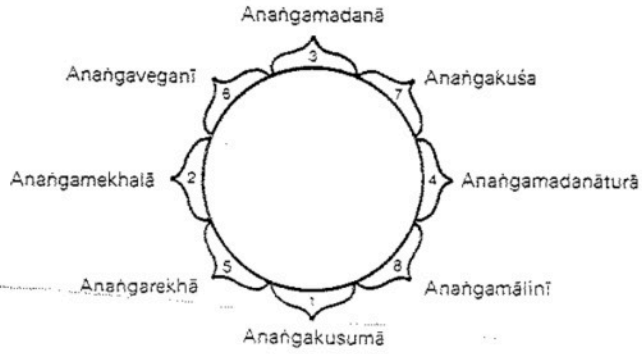
'accomplisher of all'; the sixth (Sarvaraksākāra chakra) 'protects all'; the seventh (Sarvarogahara chakra) 'cures all ills'; the eighth (Sarvasiddhiprada chakra) 'grants all perfection'; and the highest (Sarvānandamaya chakra) is 'replete with bliss'.

At the periphery of the Śrī Yantra, the square, the adept contemplates his own passions such as anger, fear, lust, etc., to overcome or conquer them.[3] The eight psychological tendencies that are considered obstacles of the mind are also invoked, as eight Mātṛikā Śaktis, in the second line of the outer periphery. Either they flank the four 'doors' of the yantra or they are invoked in the square band (bhūpura). Generally they are what we experience of the world through sense-activity and the cravings of our egotism. Thus the first Mātṛikā Śakti, Brāhmī, is associated with worldly desire, the passion that impels us to seek ephemeral joys; Maheśwarī is representative of anger; Kaumārī of constant avarice and greed; Vaishaṇavi fascinates and infatuates; Varāhi is symbolic of obstinacy and false pride; Indrāni of jealousy; Chāmuṇḍā of earthly rewards; finally, there is Mahālakshmī, who symbolizes our deficiencies and blameworthiness generally.

Around the Mātṛikā Śakti, in the third line of the square, preside Mudrā Śaktis who represent the chakras of the subtle body (see below).[4]

Because it is through our bodies that we experience the world at large and all our likes and dislikes, emotions, feelings and responses are experienced through our





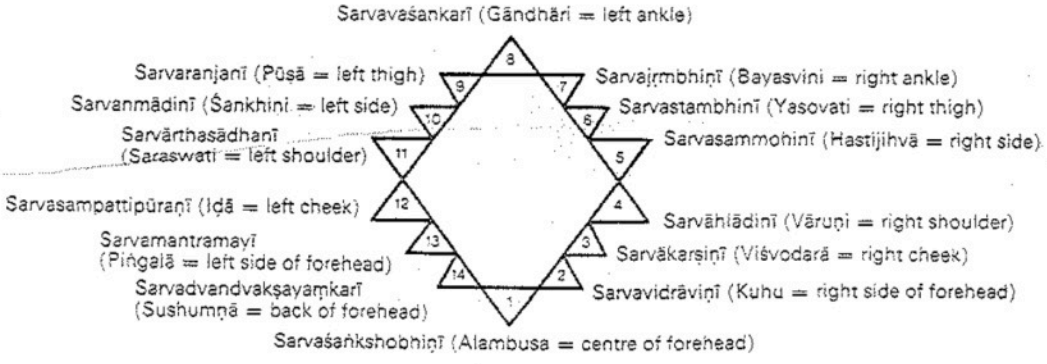
3 Sarvaśaṅkshobaṇa chakra

bodily senses, and since our physical being is composed of sixteen components – the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, ether), ten sense-organs of perception and action (ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose, mouth, feet, hands, arms, genitals), and the oscillating mind – these sixteen components are related to the sixteen petals of the Śrī Yantra lotus. Each petal is presided over by a deity of attraction who stimulates our 'sense-consciousness' through our bodily faculties, which leaves us spellbound in infatuation with ourselves.

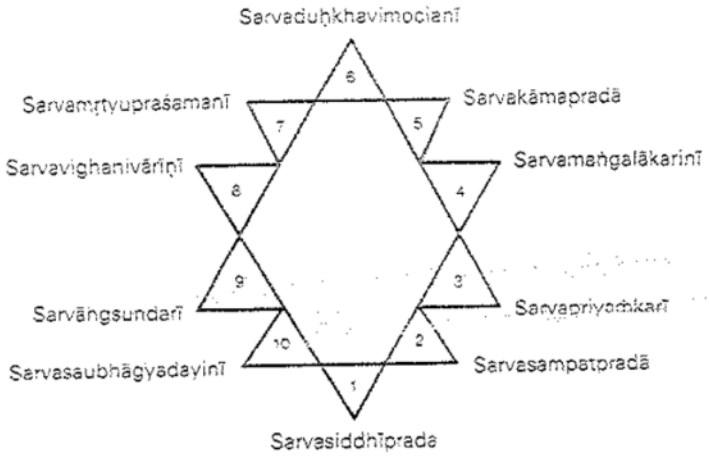
These sixteen 'attractions' veil our existence, blind our spiritual sight, keep us from knowledge, and chain us to the ceaseless cycle of life. Since they mirror our consciousness at the stage of false knowing, these Śaktis must be contemplated at the beginning of our spiritual journey.

The eight-petalled lotus, the third circuit, governs speech, grasping, locomotion, evacuation, enjoyment, and the three attitudes of rejection, acceptance and indifference. These petals are also each presided over by a Śakti.

After transcending the limitations of the physical self, the meditator has to attain an understanding of his subtle body; from the physical shell he must enter into his psychic self represented by the subtle nerves, etheric channels and vital energy of the body-cosmos. Accordingly, fourth, fifth, and sixth circuits of the Śrī Yantra symbolically illustrate the subtle nerves, and the modification of the vital energy



4 Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka chakra

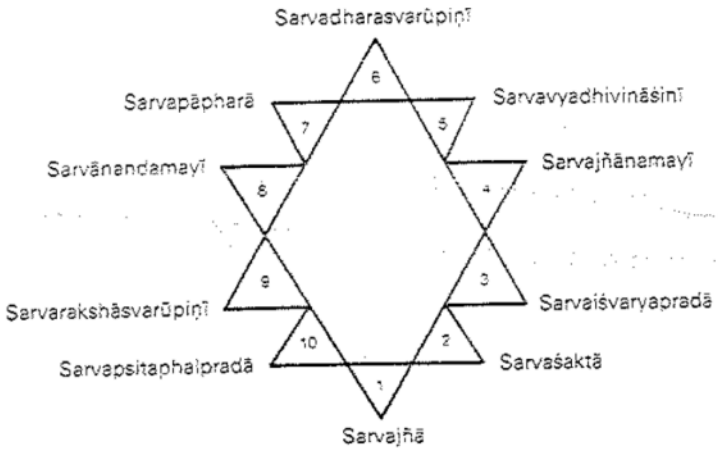


5 Sarvarthasādhaka chakra

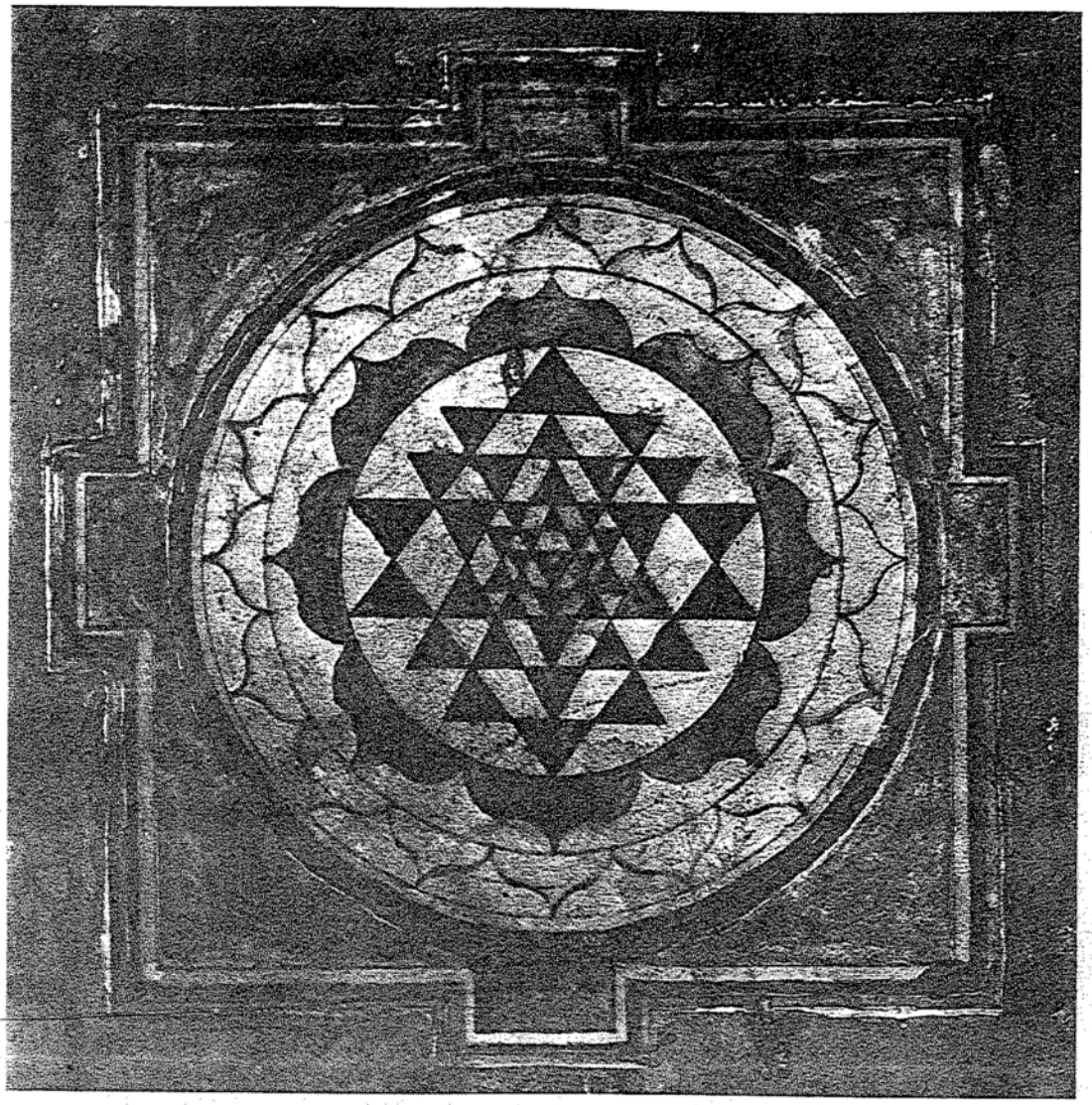
(prāṇa) which regulates the vitality of the subtle body. The first of these, the fourteen-triangled circuit, corresponds with the fourteen etheric nerves in the subtle body: six run through the right side of the body starting at the ankle and moving upwards through the right thigh, shoulder and cheek, and ultimately meeting at the centre of the forehead; four are on the left, the rest along the axis of the subtle body.

The fifth circuit of ten triangles exemplifies the dynamic life-force called prāṇa, the essential link between mind and body. The triangles represent the tenfold functions of the universal prāṇic energy in the individual subtle body: the five vital currents (Prāṇa, which draws life-force into the body; Apāna, which expels life-force; Vyāna, which distributes and circulates energy; Samāna, which controls digestion; Udāna, which controls circulation), and the five medial currents (Nāga, Kūrma, Kṛkara, Devadatta, and Dhananjaya) which mirror them.

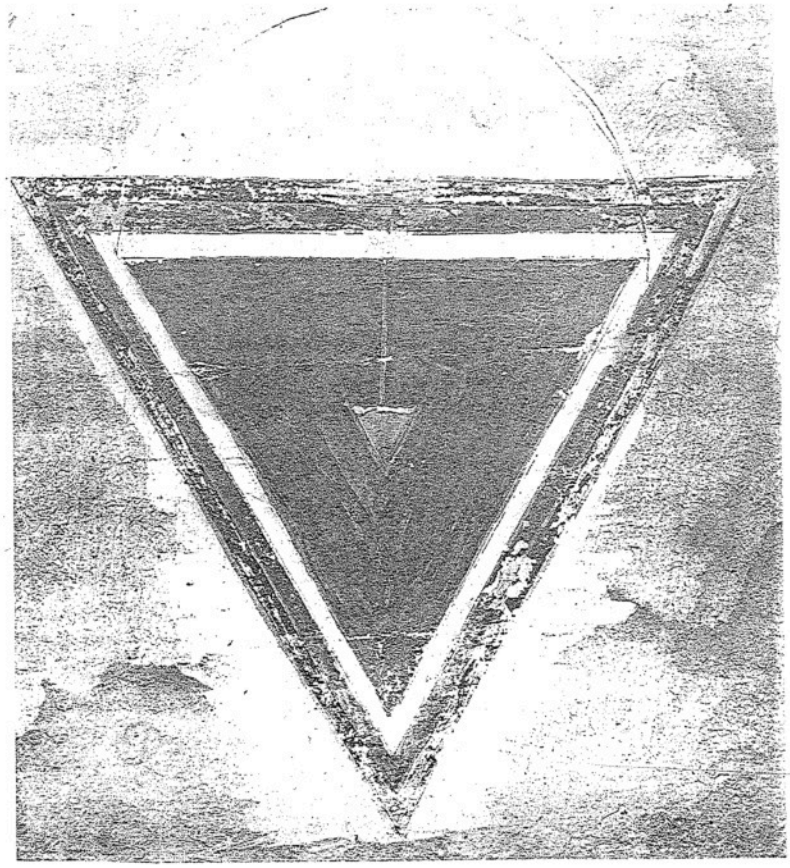
The sixth circuit which is also ten-triangled relates to the interaction between the ten functions of prāṇic energy and the ten types of digestive fire, each presided over by a deity. The mobilization of the prāṇa through the energy centres is fundamentally important.



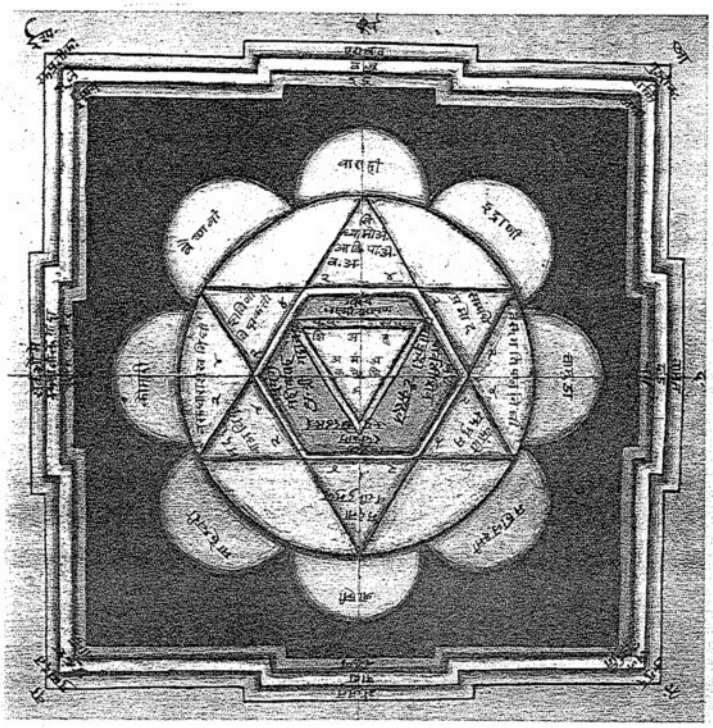
6 Sarvaraksākāra chakra



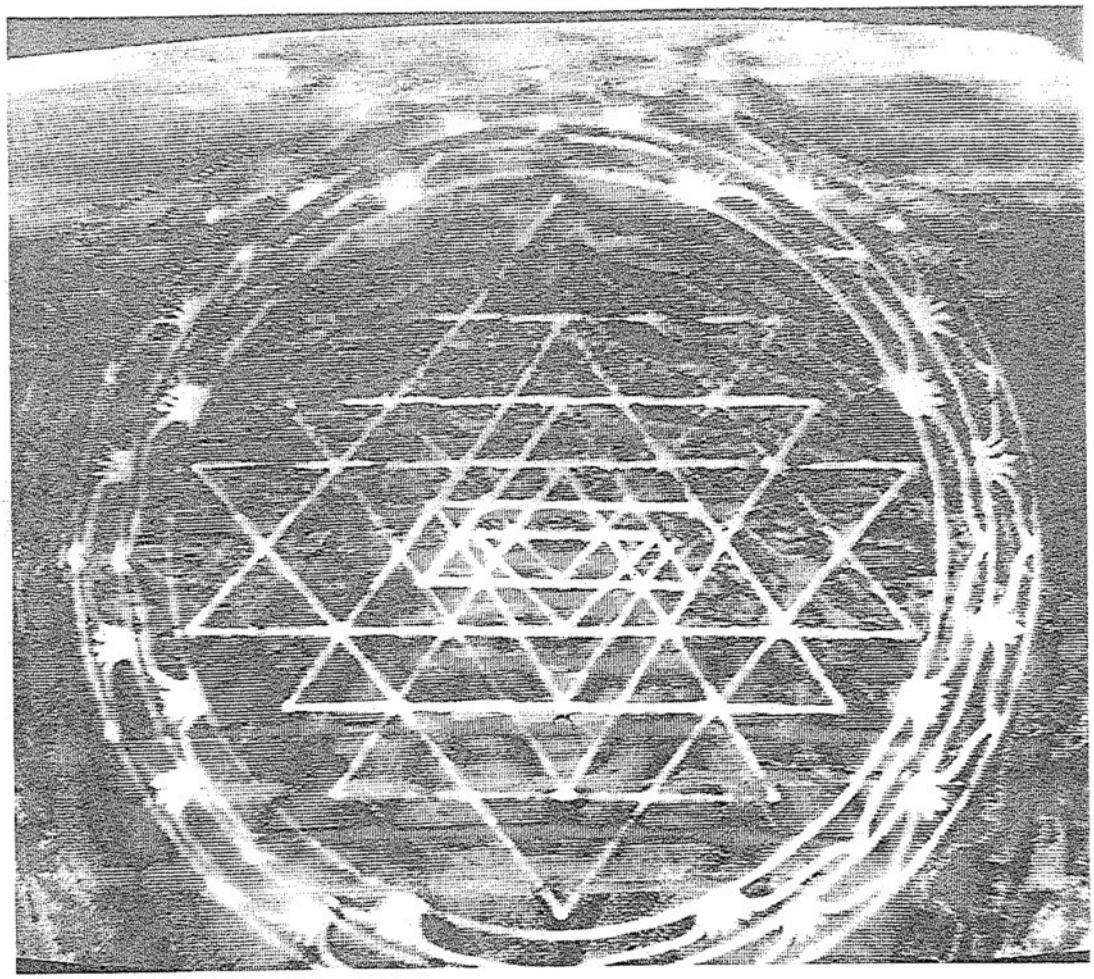
62 Śrī Yantra, the most celebrated of all tantric yantras. A mystical construction of the cosmos, the Śrī Yantra is formed by the interpenetration of two sets of triangles, four, apex upward, representing the male principle and five, apex downward, representing the female principle. The yantra is devised to give a vision of the totality of existence, so that the adept may internalize its symbols for the ultimate realization of his unity with the cosmos. Rajasthan, c. 1700. Gouache on paper



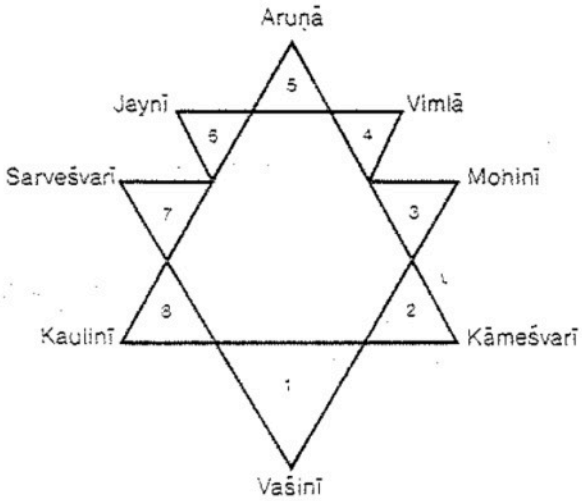
63 'The Goddess Śakti taking the form of a triangle brings forth the three worlds' (Bhāmava, Chapter xi). The three sides of the yoni, the primordial triangle, creative matrix of the cosmos, stand for the three qualities composing material nature: sattva, the ascending quality, seen as white; rajas, the kinetic quality, seen as red; tamas, the descending quality or inertia, seen as black. Rajasthan, c. 17th century. Gouache on paper



64 Yantra devoted to Śakti, used for meditation. Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper

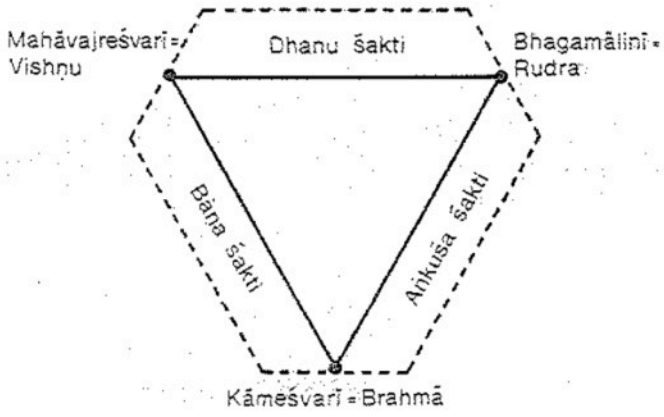


65 Śrī Yantra created in an electronic vibration field, an experiment in the translation of sound into vision. A similar experience is 'sensed' during ritual worship when the yantra pattern 'dematerializes', appearing to dissolve into a sound-pattern or vibration field of spoken mantras. Still from a film by Ronald Nameth

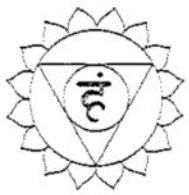
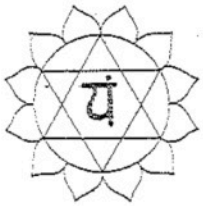
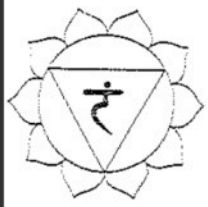
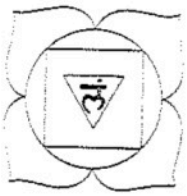


7 Sarvarogahara chakra

Conscious experience of the psychic spectrum becomes more and more subtle as one moves to the Śrī Yantra's inner enclosures. The seventh, eight-triangled circuit (Sarvarogahara) represents, first, the three constituent principles of material nature: sattva which is associated with purity or the stuff of intelligence; rajas which denotes the force or energy activating and impelling creation; tamas, mass or matter equated with inertia. These three qualities exist in individuals in varying degrees and are variously manifested: sattva is expressed psychologically as purity, tranquillity and calmness of mind; rajas as passion, egoism, restlessness; tamas as resistance to all change. The devotee can cultivate any of these qualities by his actions and thoughts; ideally, an aspirant will cultivate the sattva element of his nature over rajas and tamas. Ultimately, however, he will strive to overcome even the sattva element as the ultimate essence is above and beyond all. The other five triangles of this circuit represent two sets of polarities – pleasure/ pain, cold/heat – and the individual's will or capacity to decide upon action. Decisiveness guides the psyche to balance the continuous flux of mental activity. On the ascending scale of reality, after having understood the working of his senses the adept should begin to



8 Sarvasiddhiprada chakra

	Subtle body chakra	*Number of petals*	*Associated element and/or properties*	*Cosmic category or 'tattva'* (see p. 74)	*Seed mantra and animal symbol*	*Male deity*	*Female Energy*	*Ascending plane of the universe*
	Sahasrāra above the head	1000	Abode of bliss (Sat cit ānanda)			Paramśiva		Satya-loka
	Ājña between the eyebrows	2	mind (manas)	Mahat = Supreme Principle	Oṃ	Śaṃbhu	Hākinī	Tapo-loka
	Viśuddha throat centre	16	Ether, space Activates hearing	Organ of cognition: ears Organ of action: mouth	Haṃ white elephant	Sadāśiva	Śākinī	Jana-loka
	Anāhata heart centre	12	Air, movement Activates sense of touch	Organ of cognition: skin Organ of action: genitals	Yaṃ antelope	Isa	Kākinī	Mahar-loka
	Maṇipūra navel centre	10	Fire, expansion Activates sight	Organ of cognition: eyes Organ of action: anus	Raṃ ram	Rudra	Lākinī	Svar-loka
	Svādhishṭhāna below the navel	6	Water, contraction Activates organ of taste	Organ of cognition: tongue Organ of action: hands	Vaṃ makara (mythical crocodile)	Vishṇu	Rākinī	Bhūvar-loka
	Mūlādhāra base of spine	4	Earth, connection Activates sense of smell	Organ of cognition: nose Organ of action: feet	Laṃ airāvata (elephant)	Brahmā	Dākinī	Bhūr-loka

Subtle body chakras

To illustrate the mutual correspondences of the human body and the cosmos, tantra has created a system of psychic 'crosspoints' in which the infinite world of time and space are seen reflected in the psycho-physical structure of man. The cosmos, according to the Tantras, consists of seven ascending planes of existence, starting from earthly, gross existence, and this hierarchy is mirrored in the psychic vortices functioning as invisible yantras in the human body. 66, 68

The seven (in the Hindu tradition) major points of power in the subtle body function as yantras for inner meditative experience in Kuṇḍalinī yoga. They are visualized as geometrical figures, as wheels (chakras) or lotuses, spaced on the vertical axis of the subtle body, the Sushumṇā, which corresponds roughly to the spinal column and brain. Since these chakras embrace the entire psycho-cosmos, each is associated with a sound vibration, element, colour, devatā or animal symbol.[e]

The first chakra, known as the Mūlādhāra (root) Chakra, is situated at the base of the spine and is the gathering point of the energy of the psychic body. Its symbol is a square with an inverted triangle. In the centre of this yantra is the snake-symbol of the latent microcosmic form of energy, Devī Kuṇḍalinī, coiled around a liṅga emblem. It is governed by the element earth, and its seed-mantra is Laṃ.

The second, Svādishthāna Chakra, lies behind the genitals. It is coloured vermilion, and its form is a circle with six petals, containing a white crescent moon. In the centre is inscribed the mantra of the water element, Vaṃ.

The third, Maṇipūra Chakra, is the navel centre, governed by the element fire. It is visualized as a lotus of ten petals. Within the lotus is a red triangle with three swastika marks (T-shaped). Its seed mantra is Raṃ.

The fourth, Anāhata Chakra, is located at the level of the heart, which is conceived as a lotus of twelve petals with a hexagon at the centre. The Anāhata Chakra is the seat of the air element, and is a prime revealer of cosmic sound during meditation. Its seed mantra is Yaṃ.

The fifth chakra is known as Viśuddha Chakra and is situated at the level of the throat. It is of smoky purple hue, and its symbol is a sixteen-petalled lotus with a downward pointing triangle. In its centre is the symbol of the ether element, represented by a circle with the seed mantra Haṃ.

The sixth chakra, Ājña, is located between the eyebrows and commands the various levels of meditation. Its symbol is a circle with two petals and an inverted triangle bearing a liṅga emblem. Its seed mantra is the primordial vibration, Oṃ.

The seventh chakra, Sahasrāra Chakra, represents the apex of yogic meditation, the seat of the Absolute (Śiva-Śakti). It is visualized as measuring four fingers' breadth above the crown of the head, and is represented by an inverted lotus of a thousand petals, symbolically showering the subtle body with spiritual radiance. The Sahasrāra neutralizes all colours and sounds, and is represented as colourless.

These internal yantras mark the phases of the spiritual journey of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, the energy which is aroused in meditation for the ascent of the path of the Sushumṇā to unite with the Sahasrāra Chakra. They indicate the seven stages of

Biunity in the subtle body. Śakti, the kinetic principle, is at the base of the spine; Śiva, the static principle, is in the highest psychic centre

yogic sādhanā, and provide the mechanism through which the adept works out his psychic synthesis with the cosmos. Each of the inner chakras may be meditated upon either independently or with the aid of an external yantra. A common practice is to equate the various circuits of the external yantras with each of the seven chakras. In pyramidal-shaped yantras, each level of the hierarchy may be identified with each level of the chakras.

In addition to the seven chakras of the subtle body, the Tantras have described a vast network of subtle channels and inner vital energies which constitute, as it were, the etheric body. Cosmic biunity is represented by two invisible conduits, Iḍā (female, representing the moon) and Piṅgalā (male, representing the sun), on the left and right of the central channel. The cosmic power, Śakti, that permeates all creation lies inert in our subtle body as Devī Kuṇḍalinī (the potent source of energy of the Śakti of Śiva). Her symbol, a serpent of three and a half coils, lies blocking the entrance to the central channel with its mouth.

The technique of Kuṇḍalinī yoga consists in using prāṇa to awaken the consciousness-as-power (Śakti) in the root chakra (Mūlādhāra), located in the region of the perineum, and causing it to rise up Sushumṇā, the central channel of the subtle body, energizing the seven chakras through which the tantric universe can be absorbed into the body. Once the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti has ascended to Sahasrāra, the highest psychic centre at the crown of the head, it is made to reverse its course and return to rest in the base centre again.

In a special method of meditation practised by advanced adepts, under the guidance of a guru, the adept learns to achieve union between the Kuṇḍalinī of the microcosm (Piṇḍa) and the macrocosm (Brahmāṇḍa). These affinities are struck in the subtle body by meditation on its chakras and by finding correlations and similarities between the subtle body and the totality of the cosmos.

As we have seen earlier, spiritual endeavour in tantrism proceeds by a process of introversion. The basic aim is to reverse the journey of the individual from a chaotic outward flow of constant change to an inward state of rest; technically, a reversal of the world of pravṛtti (activity) to a state of nivṛtti (rest). The extent to which the symbolism or reversal has been integrated in Kuṇḍalinī yoga can be seen from the practice of the tantric Nātha yogis, who consider that the part of the body above the navel is Śiva (static) and that below is the personification of Śakti (dynamic), so that the place assigned in the subtle body to Śiva is the Sahasrāra Chakra (the psychic centre at the crown of the head) and to Śakti the Mūlādhāra Chakra (at the base of the spine). Between these two poles lies the expanding and contracting universe. The form of yoga practised by the Nātha yogis consists in making the kinetic flow of Śakti be absorbed in and united with Śiva. The union of the dynamic Śakti with Śiva as it ascends piercing the internal yantras means the arresting of the process of constant becoming, and a retrogression of the cosmic process to its ultimate source. The Nātha tantrikas follow a psychological and physiological discipline based on a regressive process (ultā-sādhanā) whereby the kinetic flow of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, which in the ordinary course of life flows downward, is made to come to a state of rest in its upward flow and unite with Śiva. Physiological functions of the body also

undergo progressive 'reversals', for instance, by absorption of semen and sublimation of sexual energy, which is reversed for the upward journey in Kuṇḍalinī yoga.

The basic principle in all forms of contemplation and meditation in Kuṇḍalinī yoga is that the energies should involute back to the primal source. The grosser elements of the subtle body should dissolve in the subtle elements; each class of bhutas (gross elements) is dissolved into the next class of tattvas in the ascending order (subtle elements). *Śiva Saṁhitā* (1, 78) explains: The earth [Mūlādhāra Chakra] becomes subtle and dissolves into water [Maṇipūra Chakra]; water is resolved into fire [Svādhishthāna Chakra]; fire similarly merges into air [Anāhata Chakra]; air is absorbed into ether [Viśuddha Chakra]; and ether is resolved into avidyā, which merges into great Brahman [Sahasrāra Chakra].'

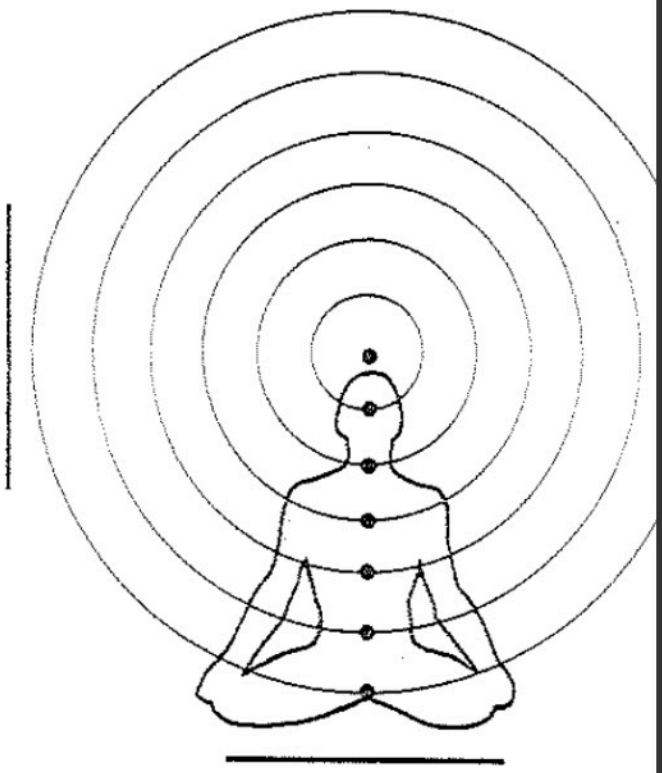
The seven inner chakras may be meditated upon in turn with the aid of an external yantra such as a yantra from Nepal which has the symbols of the seven chakras inscribed on the petals of a lotus enclosed in a four-gate square. A common practice, however, is to equate the circuits of the yantra to the body chakras.

A text[9] devoted to Śakti worship relates the chakras of the subtle body to the nine circuits of the Śrī Yantra as follows:

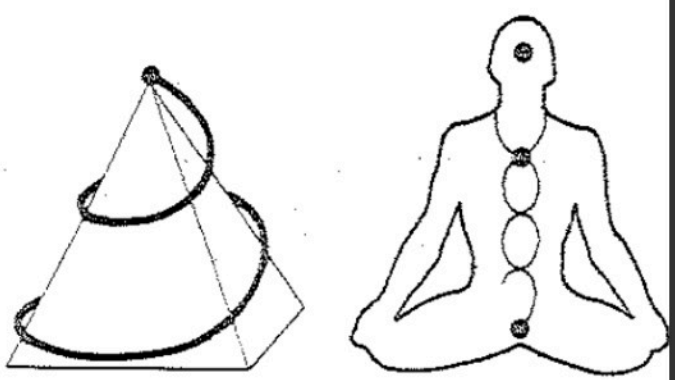
Śrī Yantra	*Chakra*
The outer square (Trailokyamohana)	Mūlādhāra (root chakra)
Sixteen-petalled lotus (Sarvāśaparipuraka)	Svādhishthāna (chakra below the navel)
Eight-petalled lotus (Sarvaśaṅkshobaṇa)	Maṇipūra (navel chakra)
Fourteen-angled figure (Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka)	Anāhata (heart chakra)
Ten-angled figure (Sarvarthasādhaka)	Viśuddha (throat chakra)
Ten-angled figure (Sarvaraksākāra)	Ājña (chakra between the eyebrows
Eight-angled figure (Sarvarogahara)	Brahmarandhra (chakra of palate)
Triangle (Sarvasiddhiprada)	Brahman (chakra of the Supreme)
Bindu (Sarvānandamaya)	Sahasrāra (chakra of space)

Hence the Śrī Yantra can be viewed as a composite image of the subtle body.

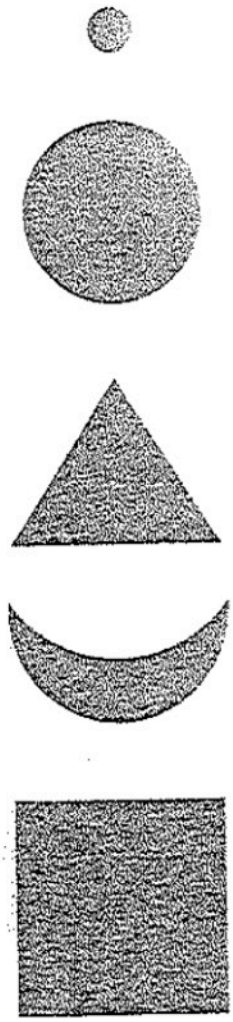
Other forms of concordance are drawn between the subtle body and the Śrī Yantra. In its three-dimensional variety, for instance, when the Śrī Yantra is known as 'Meru' (after Mount Meru, the mythical axis of the earth), its nine circuits are divided into three elevations which match the scheme of the subtle body, whose chakras can also be divided into triads. Alternatively, three chakras each containing the liṅga-emblem of the male principle are seen as marking three levels corresponding to the three elevations of the Meru form of the Śrī Yantra. These chakras are called 'knots' (granthi), and are nodes where the transformation of the adept is said to take



The seven chakras of the subtle body corresponding to seven circuits of the yantra, whose subtle energies are interiorized in ritual and meditation



The three elevations of the Śrī Yantra (left) and the three corresponding planes of the body-cosmos (right)



Symbols of the five elements in ascending order: earth, water, fire, air, ether, visualized during meditation for psycho-cosmic integration

66 The human body is considered the best of all yantras. The seven psychic centres, or chakras, on the axis of the spine are activated in sequence during meditation. From the root chakra upwards, they are known as Mūlādhāra, Svādishthāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, Ājña and Sahasrāra. South India, c. 18th century. Copper with gold wash

place. They are associated with the earthly desires and passions to be overcome during the process of Kuṇḍalinī yoga.

Meru form of the Śrī Yantra	*Chakra*	*Deity*	*Liṅga-emblem*
Square and two lotus rings	Mūlādhāra (root)	Brahmā = creation	Svayambu liṅga
Fourteen- and two ten-angled figures	Anāhata (heart)	Vishṇu = preservation	Bāṇa liṅga
Eight-angled figure, triangle and bindu	Ájña (eyebrows)	Śiva = destruction	Itara liṅga

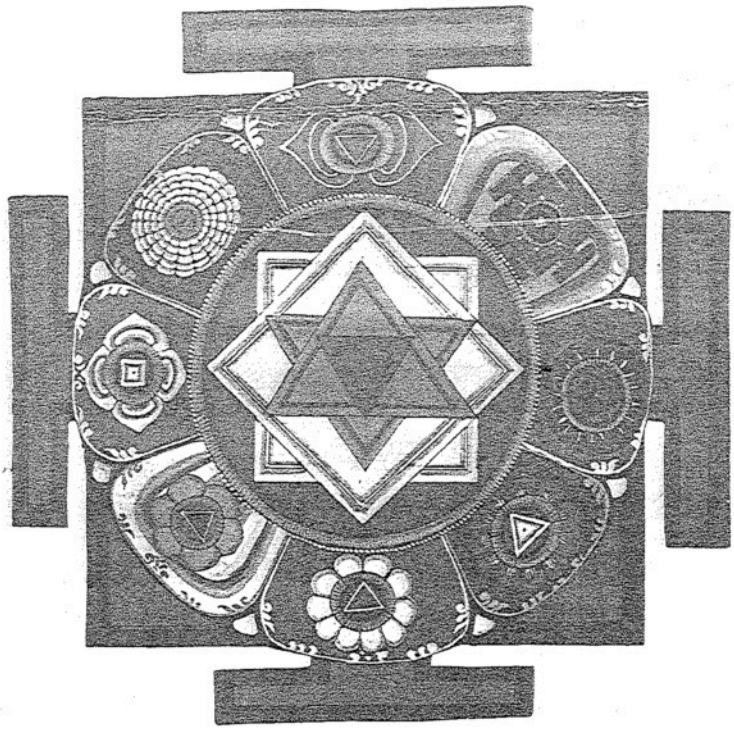
The practitioners of Anavopaya[10] in Kashmir use the Śrī Yantra when visualizing the chakras of the subtle body in a form of Kuṇḍalinī yoga called Chakrodaya. Breathing-control techniques are used to force prāṇa to circulate upwards and then downward to strike the latent Kuṇḍalinī energy in the root chakra. This circulation of the prāṇa-śakti is felt to be concomitant to the expansion of the Śrī Yantra. When the Kuṇḍalinī reaches the highest chakra, the Sahasrāra, this centre merges with the bindu of the Śrī Yantra.

A sect of 'right-hand' tantrikas, the Samayacāra, advocates a highly esoteric type of internal worship, again combining the Śrī Yantra and the chakras. Upon concentrating on the chakras in turn, all the 'truths' which they embody are spontaneously known by illumination.

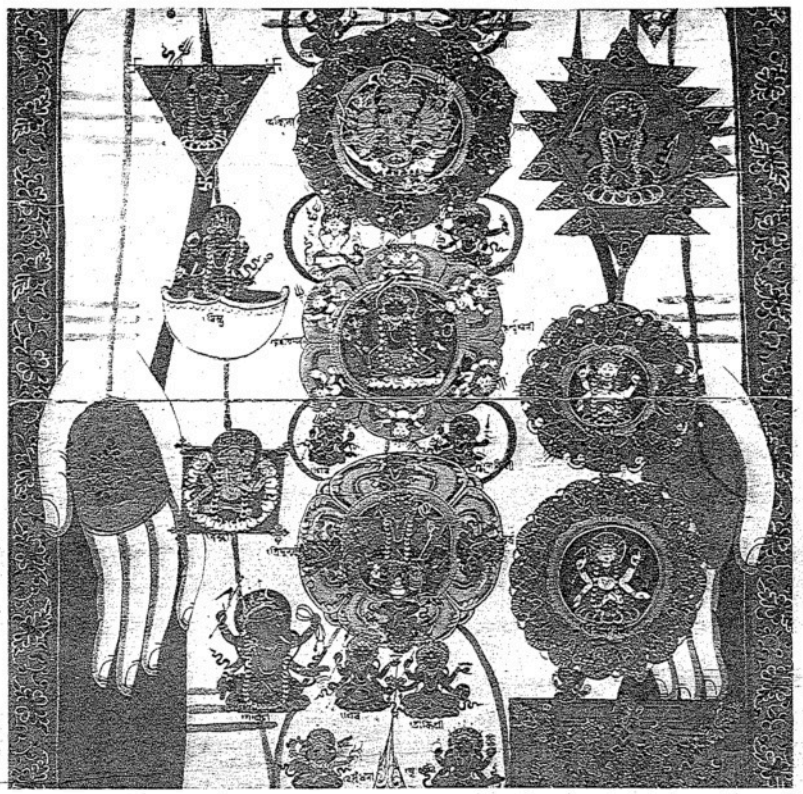
The chakras[11] can be used as foci for concentration without the aid of external yantras, either separately or together; or meditation may be carried on using the body-maṇḍala and concentrating on graphic symbols associated with each part of the subtle body. One yoga text describes this form of meditation:

> From the knee to the foot is the seat of earth. The Earth-goddess, yellow, square, and with the bolt of Indra as her emblem, should be reflected upon for five Ghatikas [two hours], after having filled the part with vital breath. From the knee to the hip is said to be the seat of water. Water, shaped as a crescent, white, and with silver as her emblem, should be reflected upon for ten Nadikas [four hours], having filled the part with vital breath. From the waist to the hip is said to be the seat of fire. There should be reflected upon [a triangle], a red, flaming fire, for fifteen Ghatikas [six hours], after a period of holding the vital breath (Kumbhaka), so it is said. From the navel to the nose is the seat of air. The strong elemental air, of the colour of smoke and the shape of a sacrificial altar, should be reflected upon there, for twenty Ghatikas [eight hours], holding the vital breath (Kumbhaka). From the nose up to the cavern [crown of the head] of the Brahman is the seat of ether. There is ether of the colour and brightness of well-pounded collyrium [black]. One should hold the vital breath (Kumbhaka) in the seat of ether with great effort.[12]

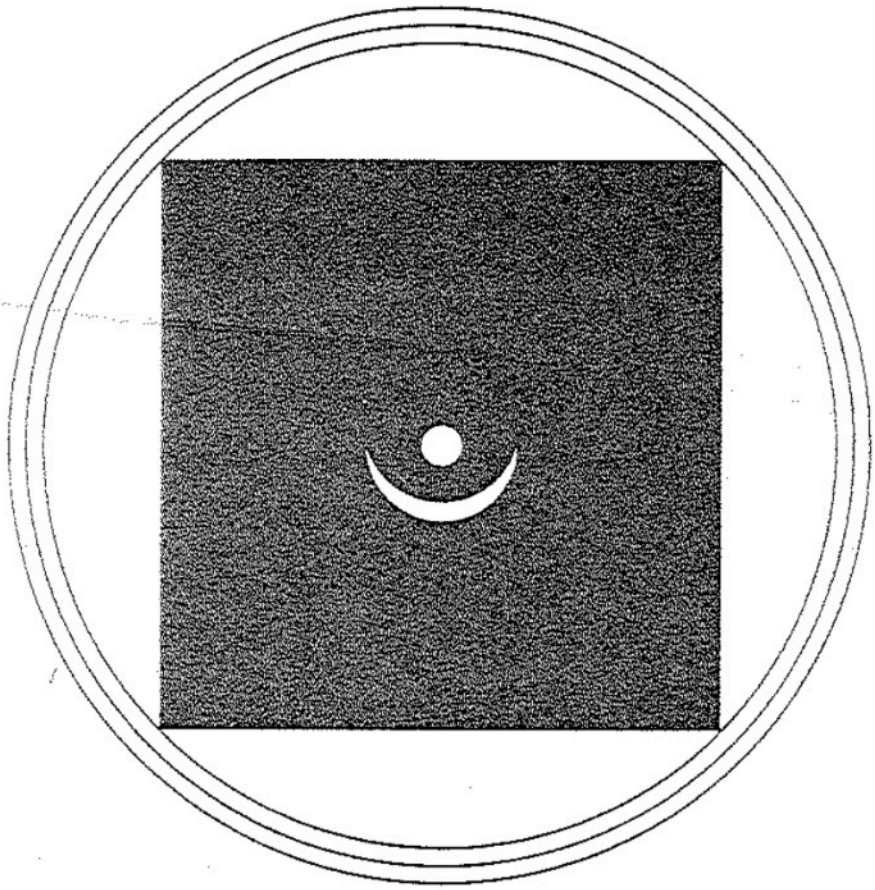
In this meditation on the five cosmic elements the adept directs the vital energies of his body to the appropriate part, suspends his breath for the required periods, and concentrates on each symbol of the elements in ascending order: the square for earth, the triangle for fire, the hexagon for air, the circle for ether. Chanting seed mantras and visualizing the presiding deities, he obtains insight into the secret forces through the body maṇḍala, and gains mastery over the elements.



f Mahāvidyā Bagalā-mukhī bearing emblems of the psychic centres of the subtle body disposed
otus petals. In meditation, the body yantra acts in conjunction with the diagram to achieve the
unity of yantra, body and cosmos. Nepal, c. 1761. Gouache on paper



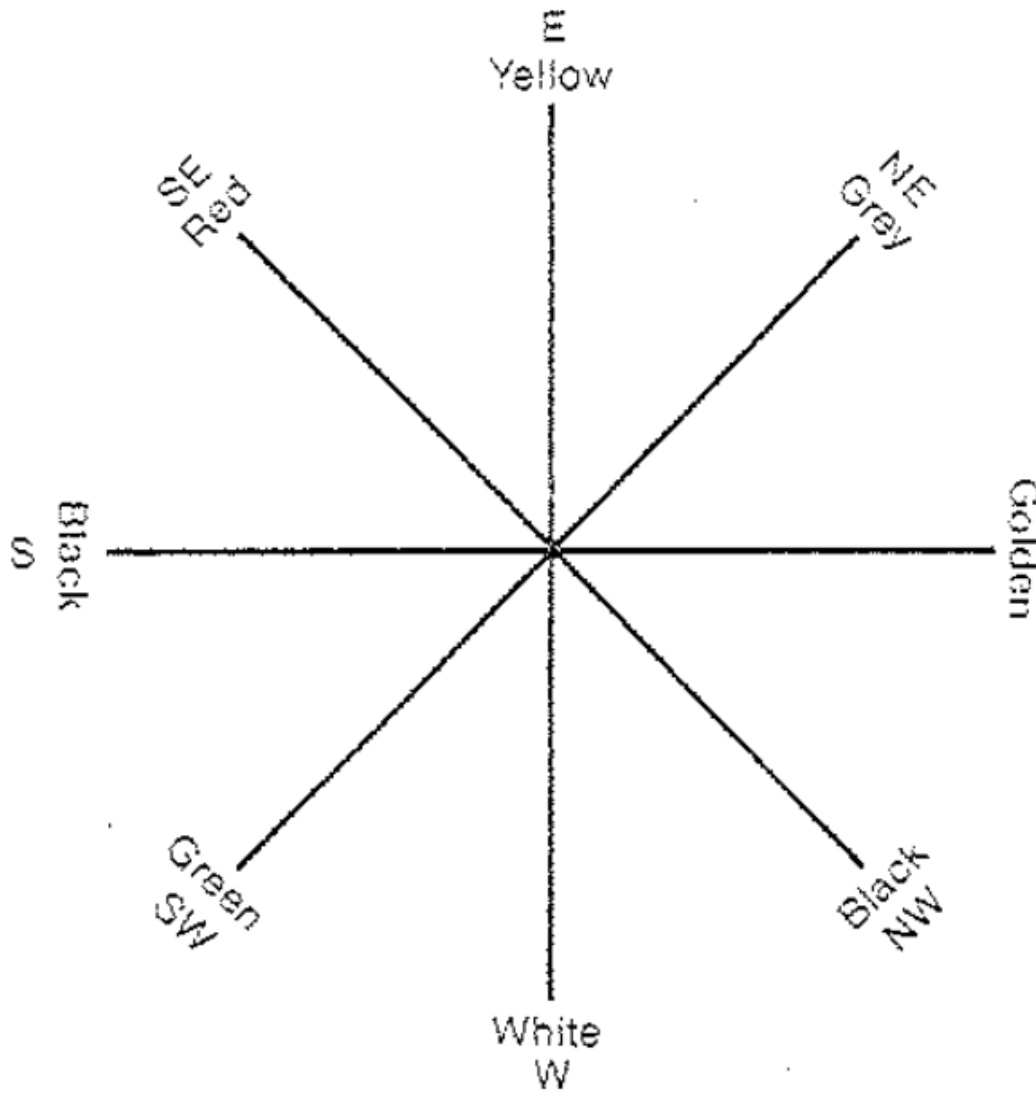
68 Three of the chakras of the subtle body, in ascending order: Mūlhādhāra at the base of the sp
Svādishthāna below the navel, and Maṇipūra at the navel, with their related symbols. Meditated
during Kuṇḍalinī yoga, these chakras represent stages in the sādhaka's progress towards enlight
achieved when the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti is finally united with Śiva at the topmost psychic centre, Saha
represented by the thousand-petalled lotus. Nepal, c. 1761. Gouache on paper



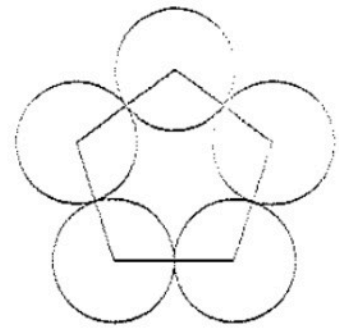
All external aids such as yantras and mantras have become like shadows. In the most advanced form of internal meditation, when ecstasy bordering on trance has been reached, even the inner yantra is regarded as obsolete, serving no spiritual purpose: 'The yogi engaged in samādhi cannot be controlled by yantra or mantra; he is beyond the power of all corporeal beings.'[18] At this stage the yantra is abandoned and may be passed to another sādhaka or immersed in holy water.

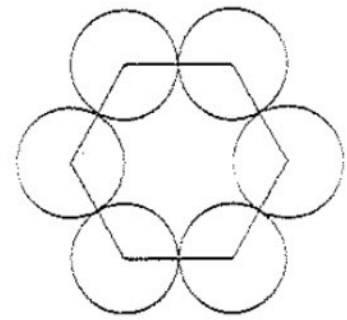
In the early stages of meditation the yantra was considered as a partial archetype of the noumenon, whereas the adept was a part of phenomenal existence. When the sought realization is achieved, the yantra becomes a part of phenomena (mundane existence) and the sadhaka an external aspect of noumena. This paradox of a yantra being eternally sacred (full of cosmic realities when seen from a specific dimension of ritual process) and profane (empty of universal truths when viewed outside the ritual process) emphasizes the core-nature of the yantra symbol: it is purely a functional symbol in tantric liturgy, yet shielding unbounded truths, the secret forces of cosmic mystery.

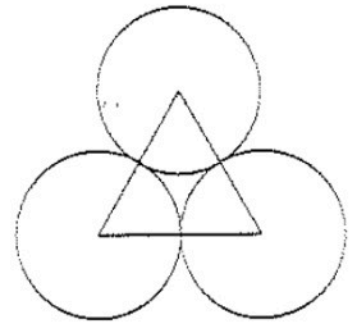
Cit-kuṇḍa Yantra with the yoni emblem, the seat of bliss, in the centre. The four points of the square represent the four aspects of one's psyche: the pure self (ātman), the inner self (antarātman), the cognizing self (jñanātman), the supreme self (paramātman). These constitute the vessel of one's inner stream of consciousness (cit-kuṇḍa) into which is offered all aspects of one's being in the meditation of inward oblation. After the tantric work Kaulāvalīnirṇaya

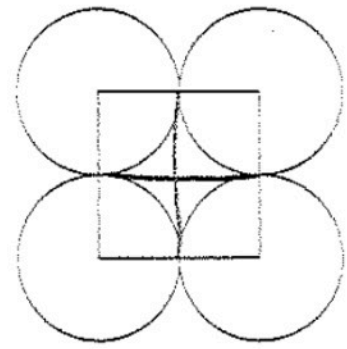


The colours associated with the directions. After the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Chap. XIII, 90–5









Four primal yantra shapes, based on mathematical equations from the Sanskrit treatise on mathematics, the Caṇita Kaumudi (1356)

Generally speaking, then, the aesthetics of yantra would be meaningless if content and expression were separated. The yantra for meditation, both in its structure and use of colour, is not a haphazard conglomeration of percept and concept. It is directed by a philosophical content which expands and multiplies its forms. Whether the figures of the yantra appear singly or as parts of a more complex structure they never lose their intrinsic meanings or their symbol-value.

The construction of the power-diagram

The symmetry that permeates creation as a norm is fundamental to the construction of the yantra. Leaves of plants do not grow out of tune with nature's laws, and the yantra similarly evolves in accordance with traditional rules and in an orderly and harmonious mathematical progression. The three principal modes of evolution are the emergent, which is straight and symmetrical (ṛiju); the curved and symmetrical (suṣama); and the quasi-symmetrical or eccentric (viṣama).[6] The root principle of this mathematical descent from the bindu to the unified and orderly periphery is called ardhamātrā (from the Sanskrit root, rdh = to grow, mātrā = measure), or the measure that is not static but grows and evolves in accordance with the laws of harmony and rhythm.

From the source, the bindu, derives the expanding line, seen as the continuum (nāda); from nāda originate magnitude and dimension (parimeya); from parimeya arise the symbiotic opposites (plus-minus, male-female), centrifugal and centripetal polarities and the order of numbers (saṁkhyā). Number provides harmony and stability, integration and unity. Thus the number 3 gives specific location to magnitude and becomes a triangle, 4 a square, 5 a pentagon, 6 a hexagon, etc. As we have seen, these numbers are not simply sums of integers, but have specific symbolic relationships with philosophical ideas.

This integral relationship of form and content also operates in reverse. If the structure of the yantra is imperfect, that is, if the balance of the outer form is distorted or if even a single line or symbol is eliminated, then the content and symbolic significance will be abolished simultaneously. Moreover, according to this principle, the maker of a deformed yantra (as well as the one who worships it) will suffer a cognate distortion of the archetypal image within his psyche. Any disregarded error in the making of the symbol will lead to a psychic disequilibrium in the sādhaka and destroy his sādhanā. To avoid error, the yantra is executed with extreme care following traditional prescriptions to the minutest detail. No corrections are ever possible. If an error is made, the yantra is immersed in holy water and a new one is begun.

The yantra-siddhāis (sages to whom the powers of the yantra have been revealed) declare that if a yantra fails to become 'active' the fault lies with the person using the yantra and never with the yantra itself, for the power-diagram is never tentative or arbitrary, but is based on laws of space, vibration, number and dynamics.

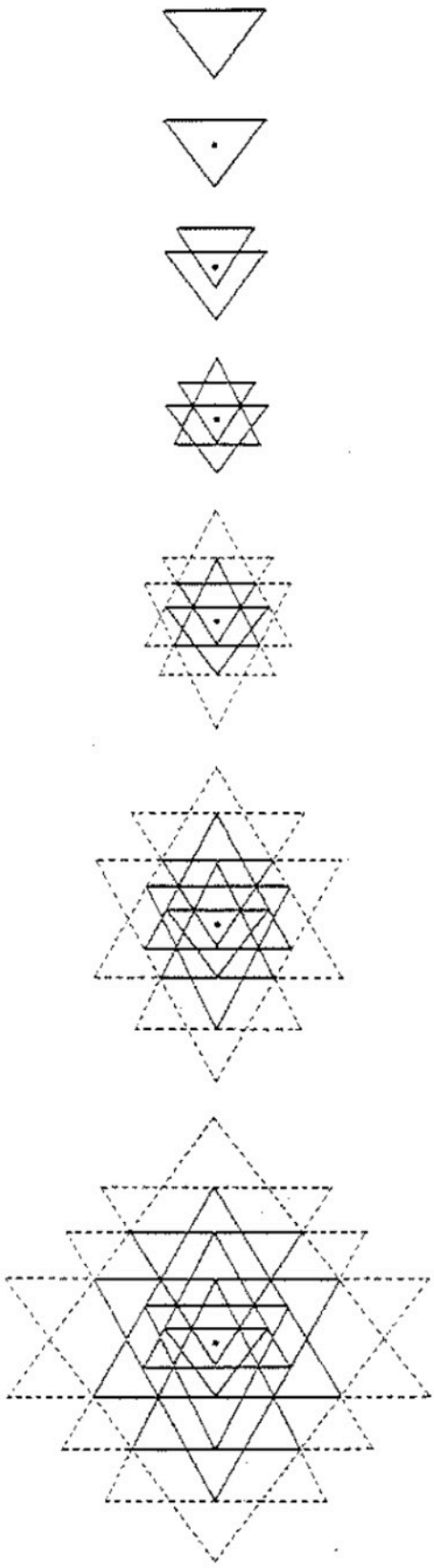
The greatest of all yantras, the Śrī Yantra, devoted to the worship of the Goddess, is a visual masterpiece of abstraction, flawless in its proportions and symmetry. The

technique[7] of its construction is outlined in a number of texts, and is a unique and complete rite. Lakshmīdhara, the commentator of *Saundaryalaharī*, a collection of devotional hymns dedicated to the Goddess, outlines two principal methods of construction: one, used by the 'right-hand' path tantrikas, is the order of evolution (sṛiṣṭi-krama) in which the yantra is constructed in geometrical progression from bindu outwards; the other, the order used by the 'left-hand' path tantrikas, is the order of dissolution (laya-krama), in which construction is from the circle moving inwards.

In traditional Indian art, the process of creation falls into a pattern similar to worship. Coomaraswamy,[8] quoting several Sankskrit sources, describes the various disciplines which an artist has to undergo. As the first step in the ritual which precedes creation of a sculpted image, for example, he goes to a solitary place. There he must discipline his impulses, control his physical and mental processes and suppress the chaotic world of the subconscious through penetrating concentration. Sometimes, to reach the inner depths of his consciousness, 'the imager, on the night before beginning his work and after ceremonial purification, is instructed to pray: O thou Lord, teach me in dreams how to carry out the work I have in mind.'[9] After the artist has reached an 'inner poise and moral grace', and integrated himself emotionally and spiritually, he evokes the deity by the means of dhyāna (trance) mantras, which provide him with a sort of mental blueprint for the execution of the image. After the work is completed a priest consecrates the image in a rite called the 'opening of the eye' which endows it with sacred power. This procedure emphasizes how far such artistic expression is from being an 'aesthetic' exercise. At no point in the whole discipline is the 'artist' separated from his art; and in the activity of creation, he annihilates all trace of his individuality and selfhood. The shapes and forms he creates reveal to him the macrocosmos as it exists within himself. In this sense the created object 'prepares' its maker for a spiritual return to his primordial source.

Similarly, the construction of a yantra is a complete rite to be followed meticulously. Care is taken to choose the most propitious place and time of the day. The surface to which it is applied must bear auspicious signs and be smooth. The drawing, however, may be perfect in its proportions, correct in its brushwork, and faultless in its colourings, it may be scrupulously drawn according to all the rules of linear formation set out in the shāstras (texts), and yet may fail to reflect the true significance of the yantra, unless the maker can transmit to the figure his inner life-tie with cosmic forces. Until he can 'feel' the nature and substance of the cosmic bond in the deeper layers of his psyche, until he is able to impart the reality which he has intuited and is himself a part of, the yantra he draws will fail to reflect its participation in the transcendent. The maker pours forth an 'intensity for which there is no word'. He must feel the very nature of the energy to be transmitted to the yantra, affecting all who view it.

This type of creation has obviously no room for 'art for art's sake'. Indeed, this 'metaphysical aesthetics' holds that someone who views a yantra in its original environment, whether a temple or a humble house, can know it and comprehend its



The traditional method of drawing the Śrī Yantra, in the evolution mode (sṛiṣṭi-krama), as outlined by the sage Lakshmīdhara in the tantric text, the Saundaryalaharī (8th century)

inner meaning better than the person who views it in the artificial setting of a museum or gallery. The yantra exteriorizes a universal intuition, and is experienced through stages, beginning with worship and ending in reintegration.

Icon and yantra

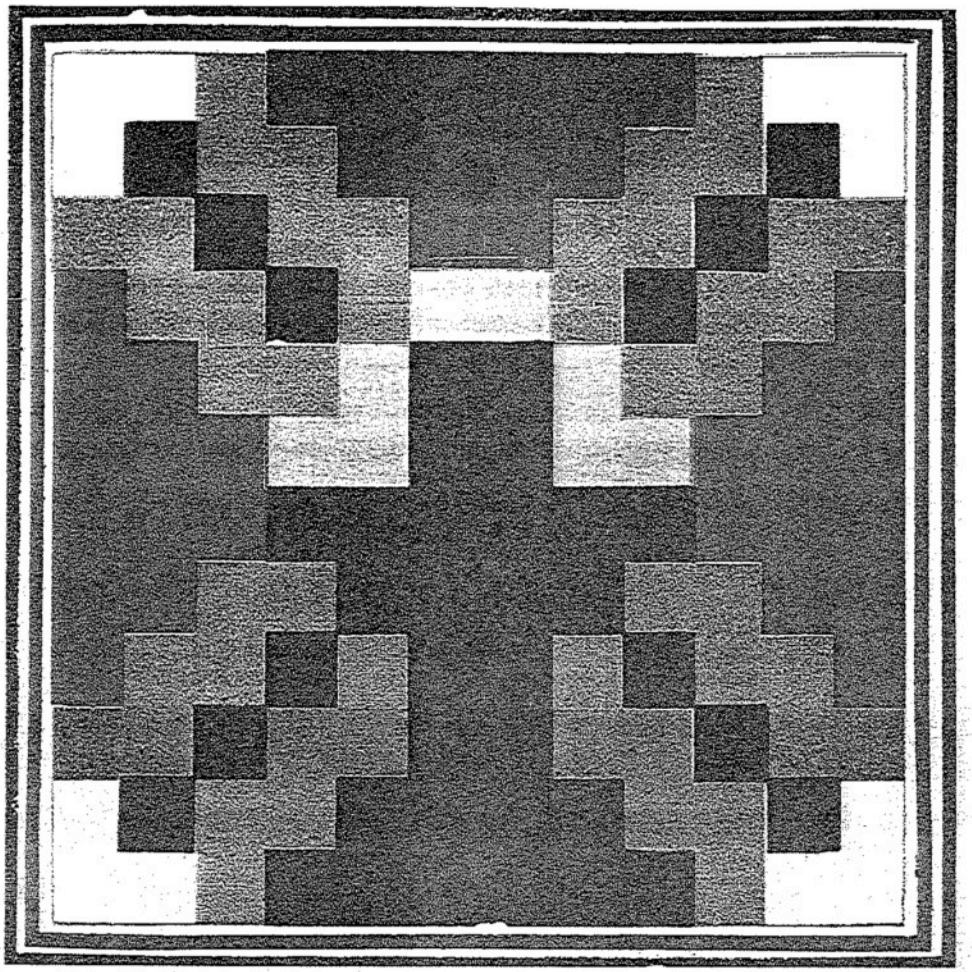
The inseparability of form and content is only one aspect of the aesthetics of the yantra. Another concerns the radical abstraction of its symbolic forms, in contrast to the 'realism' of iconographic art. An example is the iconographic image of the tantric
60 goddess Durgā, as described in the 'Devī-Māhātmya' of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, as
61 opposed to her yantra form prescribed in the tantric texts, an extremely bold contrast in expression.

In her iconographic form, Durgā is described as having emerged from the energies of Vishṇu, Śiva and all the gods who sent forth their power in the form of streams of flames, combining themselves into a mass of cloud which grew and grew until it condensed into the shape of the goddess. The verses of the Devī-Māhātmaya describe the formation of her physical body and her iconographical attributes:

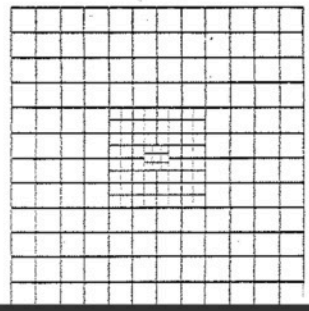
> Born out of the bodies of all the Gods, that unique effulgence, combined into a mass of light, took the form of a woman, pervading the triple worlds with its lustre.
>
> In that effulgence, the light of Śiva formed the face. The tresses were formed from the light of Yama and the arms from the light of Vishṇu.
>
> The two breasts were formed from the moon's light, the waist from the light of Indra, the legs and thighs from the light of Varuṇa and the hips from the light of the earth.
>
> The feet from the light of Brahmā and the toes from the sun's light. The fingers of the hand from the light of the Vasus and the nose from the light of Kuvera.
>
> The teeth were formed from the light of Prajāpati, the lord of beings; likewise, the triad of her eyes was born from the light of fire.
>
> The eyebrows from the two Sandhyās; the ears from the light of the wind. From the light of other gods as well, the auspicious goddess was formed.[10]

Projecting an overwhelming omnipotence, the three-eyed goddess adorned with the crescent moon emerged with her eighteen arms each holding auspicious weapons and emblems, jewels and ornaments, garments and utensils, garlands and rosaries of beads, all offered by individual gods. With her pulsating body of golden colour, shining with the splendour of a thousand suns, standing erect on her lion-vehicle (vāhana) and displaying her triumph over the dark forces, she is one of the most spectacular of all iconic personifications of cosmic energy.

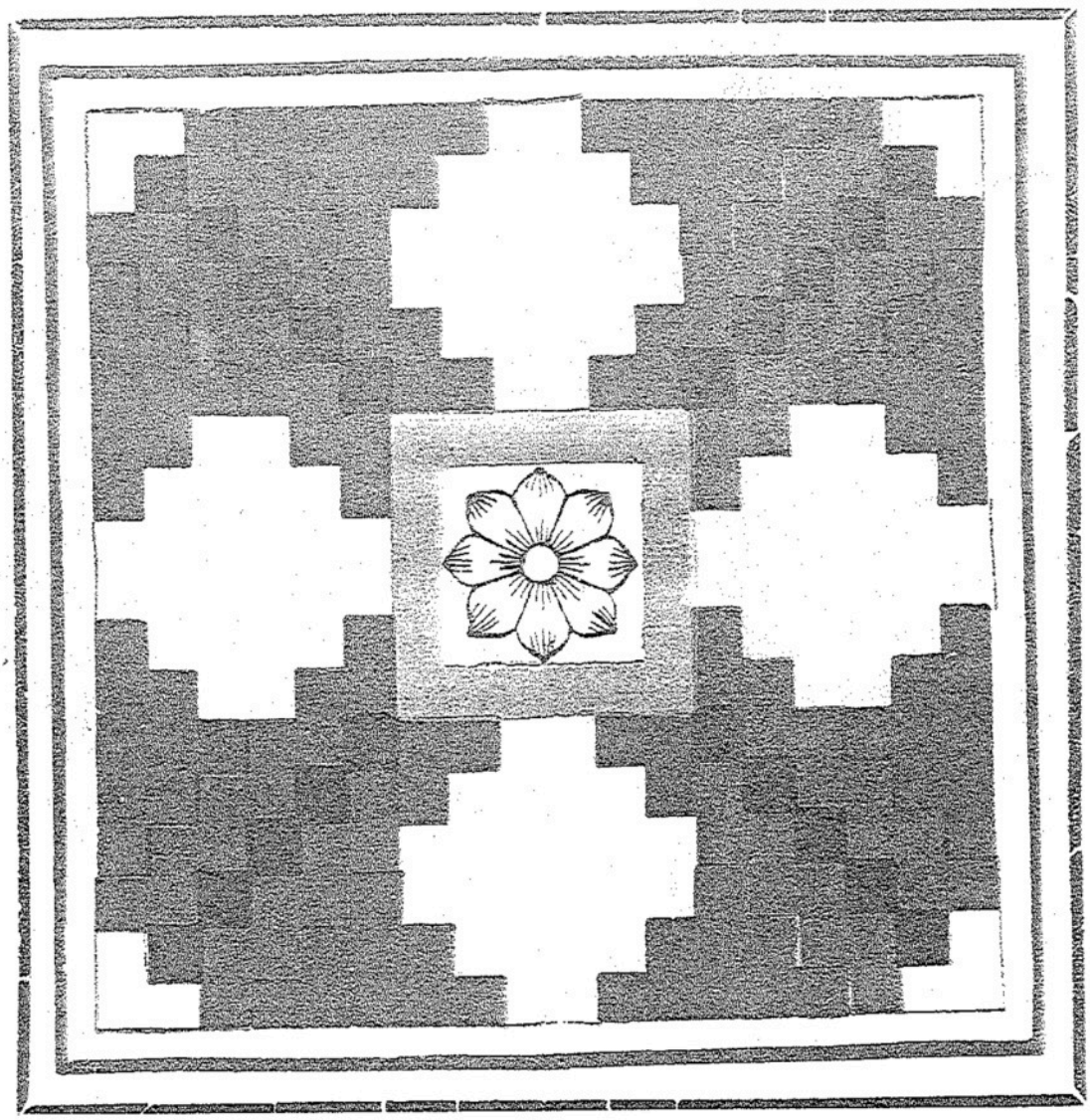
In contrast, Durgā's yantra form is described in the *Tantrasāra*[11] as a composition of three triangles forming nine angles surrounded by three circles, with an eight-petalled lotus enclosed by a square with four gates, and the Goddess's seed mantra in the centre. The yantra forms a linear field of energy, without any likeness (amūrta) to the concrete image (mūrti) of Durgā. The magnificent conception of Durgā, with all her complex iconographic attributes, has been resolved into a simple geometrical equation retaining the vitality and life-force of all her auspicious personifications.



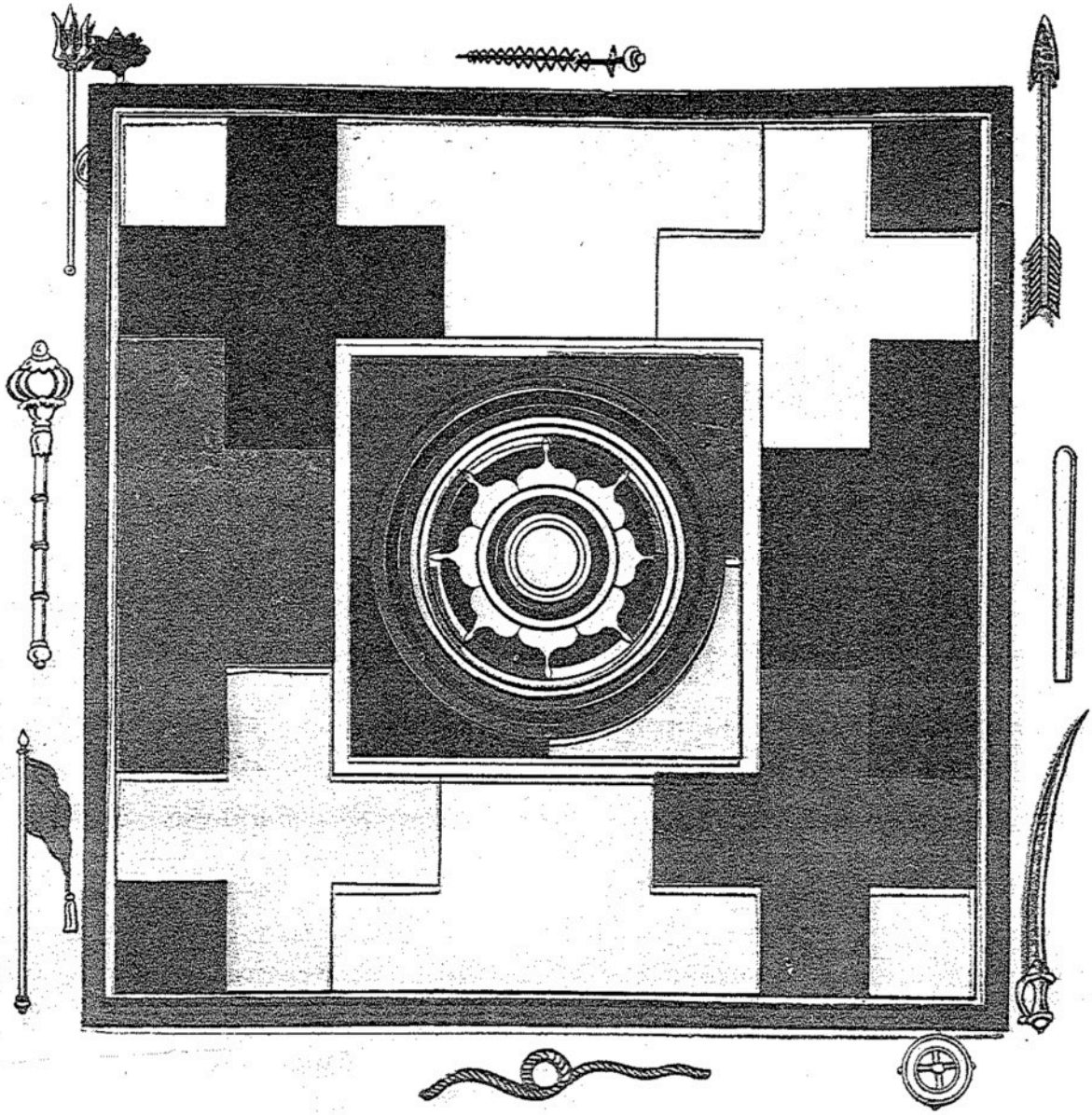
70 Ekaliṅgatobhadra Yantra, an example of a yantra of Śiva with liṅga-yoni emblem (in the centre) illustrating the cosmic wholeness of the male and female principles. Benares, hand-blocked colours, contemporary image based on traditional forms



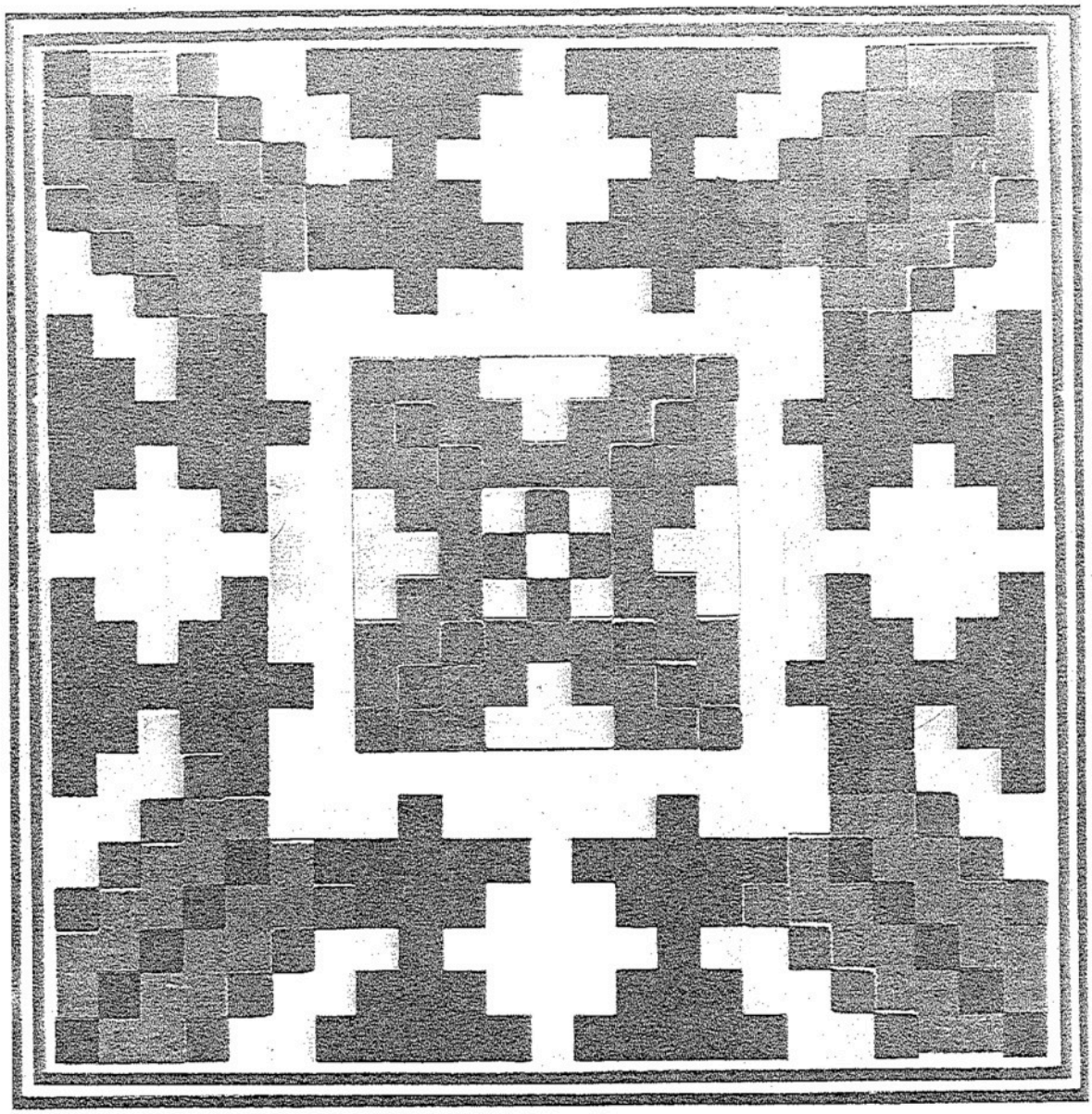
71 Diagram of a Vedic fire altar (1500 BC), whose symbolic grid-square form has survived in the yantra diagrams of later periods



72 Sarvatobhadra Yantra, which may be used in the worship of any deity. The main deity is invoked in the centre and the surrounding deities in each of the coloured squares extending to the four cardinal directions. Benares, hand-blocked colours, contemporary image based on traditional forms



73 Varuṇa Maṇḍala. The deity of cosmic order is also 'Lord of Waters', invoked in the ceremonial jar which is placed in the centre of the yantra. The emblems of the deities and regents of space guard the yantra's sacred enclosures. Benares, hand-blocked colours, contemporary image based on traditional forms



74 Aṣṭaliṅgatobhadra Yantra, a yantra of Śiva with eight liṅga-yoni emblems symbolizing the unity of the cosmic male-female polarity. Benares, hand-blocked colours, contemporary image based on traditional forms

The overwhelming appeal to the senses and arousal of emotions of fear or reassurance characteristic of the icon are not the purpose of the yantra, whose abstraction and serene equilibrium take the viewer beyond the partial aspects of the deity to the universal. Further, the yantra, unlike the icon, is universal in the sense that it is not subject to geographical or historical variations of style, but has maintained a common tradition throughout India.

Visually, the yantra has more in common with Indian temple architecture than with icons of the deity, as we shall see in Chapter 7. Echoing the yantra, the main image of the divinity of the temple is placed in the inner sanctuary which is surrounded by enclosures adorned with figures of secondary divinities, and the inner space of a temple, like the yantra, is so arranged that the devotee has to cross a series of sacred enclosures in order to reach the most sacred centre. Temple and the devotional yantra each create a total 'universe-pattern', combining in its multiplicity and hierarchy all levels and aspects of existence.

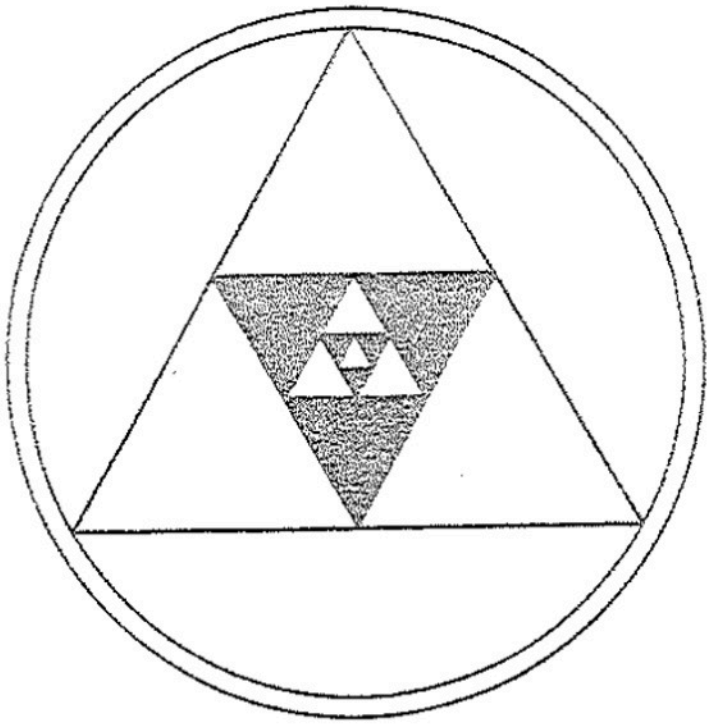
Each deity may be apprehended by the sādhaka for meditation or worship in any or all of the following forms: as a mūrti (icon); as a yantra (aniconic geometrical equation); as a mantra (esoteric sound-syllable); as a bīja-mantra (an atomic monosyllable). The icon is the grossest manifestation of the devatā; the yantra is the geometrical counterpart of the icon; and the mantra condenses the aesthetic potentiality of form as sound. In this sequence from gross to subtle, the yantra forms a link between form and formlessness, visible and invisible energy. The abstraction of the yantra is a first major step towards the resolution of dense materiality into its subtlest transformation, the monosyllabic mantra. We have seen earlier (Chapter 2) that yantra and mantra form a continuous dialectic. Hence the aesthetic of yantra should never be considered as divorced from its sound dynamics.

Concrete and abstract images offer alternatives to the worshipper according to his devotional needs and temperament. The cult-bound devotee may concentrate on the divinity in concrete form, where a highly advanced adept may use only mantra and yantra. Yet icon and yantra should not be seen as separate entities; they are two ways of apprehending the Supreme Principle, two sparks of the same fire.

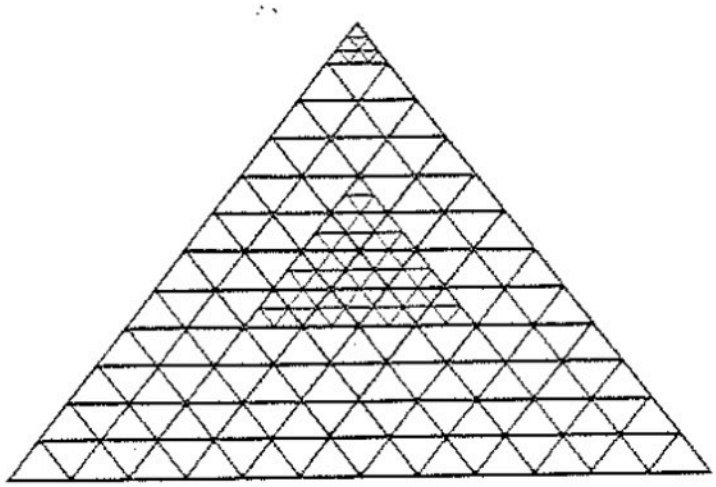
Traditional abstract Indian art

Abstraction and simplicity as compared with representational and decorative art styles are believed by some to be alien to Indian art, yet the most significant characteristic of the yantra is its geometrical elegance and purity of archetypal form. The art of yantra is akin to the art of the Zen painters who seek to convey the whole mystery of creation in a few brush strokes, eliminating all detail and condensing form to its root essence.

Geometrical abstraction of forms has a long history in India. It can be traced back as far as Vedic times (second millennium BC) to a variety of carefully constructed fire altars whose symbolic form parallels that of yantras. Literary evidence shows that art, in the Vedic period, had reached a high level of symbolic expression. As Vedic religion was one of non-anthropomorphic nature worship, icons and temples were



Smar-hara Yantra (detail), the 'remover of desire'. The circle is the latent Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, which when aroused can penetrate beyond the successive planes of inwardness illustrated by the five male and female triangles which correspond to the five psychic sheaths that envelop the innermost self



Pranga-cit. Vedic fire altar in a form of a magical triangle, associated with rites for gaining strength and supremacy

absent. Consequently the place where the sacred rites were held was marked only by a sacred enclosure, the container of the ever-burning ritual fire, symbolically the point where heaven and earth met.

The Vedic altars were given simple shapes. Their plans range from circular and square to combined geometrical figures, and were purely abstract in their genesis as well as in their final form. Of celestial significance, the square is the fundamental shape of Vedic altars, as with the Ahvaniya fire, the Uttara Vedi, the Ukha; all the other shapes are either based on or derived from it. The altar represented the material elements of the cosmic being (Purusha). Its bricks were laid pointing towards the cardinal directions to symbolize the vast extension of the universe; its heart was the place where the ritual fires were kindled. The altar combined the symbolic features of the deity, i.e. fire, and the sacrificial rites, linked together by the sacred plinth. Fire was the *axis mundi* that united the heavens and earth, and the altar symbolically represented the pillar that held the four regions (E W N S) together: 'Upon the back of Aditi I lay thee [altar], the sky's supporter, Pillar of the Quarters.'[12] Fire ruled over the three zones of the cosmos (earth, air, sky), and the altar's construction embodied this principle: three of its five layers were arranged to represent the three levels of the Vedic cosmos.

Many yantras used for ritual worship have retained archaic characteristics of these Vedic altars, though wide variation in detail was introduced as they came under the influence of tantrism. Altar-plan and yantra equally have strong cosmic affinities and are executed according to mathematical principles without any vestige of ornamentation.

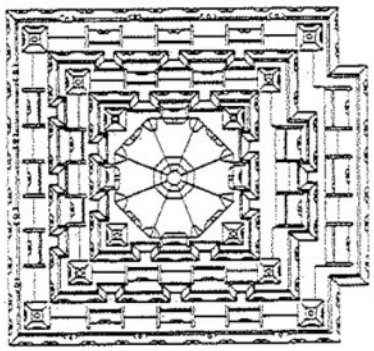
Centrality and 'wholeness'

Despite its varieties the yantra's form retains its mathematical perfection. The extension of the bindu into line suggesting direction, motion and energy, continuing with regular expansion of linear shapes creates geometric patterns of increasing complexity. The yantra emerges as a perfect 'hologram', a figure of inner coherence and unity. A line can be divided to give smaller units without assuming wholeness or organic unity of composition. But when a point is placed in the centre of a given composition (as in a yantra), its spatial values begin to relate to the centre and all its parts are transfigured into a whole. Though all the concentric figures in the yantra are 'closed' shapes and form integral units in themselves, their inner balance is maintained, even where strongly contrasting shapes are related. No matter how it is arranged, a yantra's centre integrates all linear flow.

The cosmos is conceived as 'holon' (a perfect whole) or a 'closed universe' in which all elements of life are constantly recomposed at the end of cosmic cycles. Thus all manifestation within this closed universe is balanced by an eternal immutable reality, the indivisible centre. A yantra is thus a geometrical paradigm of a holon, and a mystical construct of the universe in which all polarities are harmoniously united.

7

Architectural Yantras



Plan and elevation of the Dharmarāja-ratha at Mahabalipuram, illustrating the centred, three-tier yantra-like construction

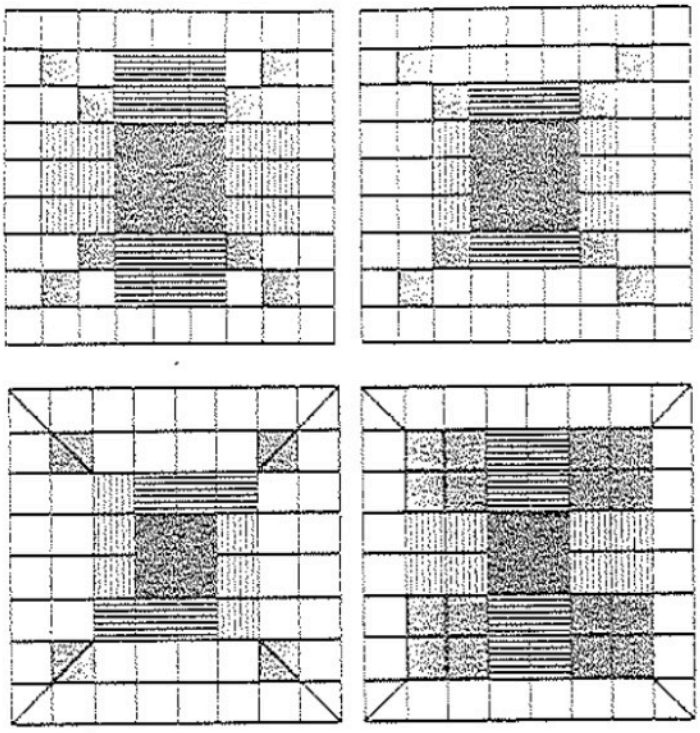
In Hindu tradition, temples are considered as the abode and bodies of gods. Though the earliest Hindu shrines and temples were small and simple structures, with the passage of time temples grew more varied and complex in plan and elevation, gradually including a variety of subsidiary structures within their compounds. The exterior walls of the temples are richly overlaid with carvings and sculptures, a teeming assembly of male and female figures, animal, vegetable and floral forms, mythic images of gods and goddesses, divine and semi-divine beings – all representing the entire panorama of the life of nature. In contrast, the innermost cella, the womb-chamber (Garbhagriha), lies hidden among the folds of the massive outer walls, reached through a series of ceremonial halls and stairways, whose walls and ceilings are covered with paintings or lined with icons installed in niches. These halls lead gradually up from ground-level, the mundane, to the highest regions of the spiritual, opening finally on to the dark, relatively small Garbhagriha, where an image or emblem of the temple's tutelar deity resides. The Garbhagriha represents the culmination of the individual's search and is the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple. It lies directly beneath the temple's spire.

Whether humble sanctuaries or complex temple compounds, all Hindu temples have been built on the scheme of the ritual diagrams, yantras and maṇḍalas. These yantras are of a specific type, different from those used for personal ritual worship and meditation.

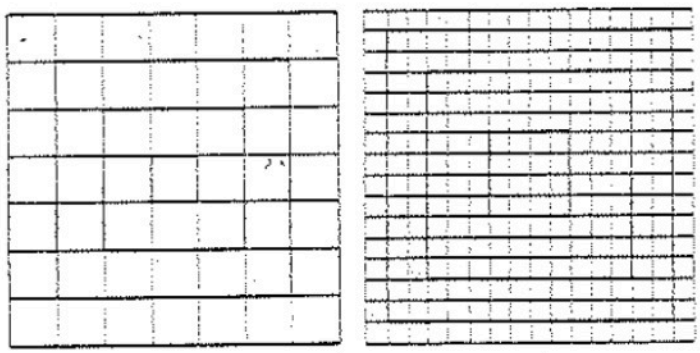
Architectural yantras are not ground-plans for temples but schematize the principles on which the sacred precincts of the temples are constructed. The dimensions and measurements of temple architecture are specified in early architectural manuals that also prescribe rituals to accompany the laying-down of a building's basic plan.

The Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala

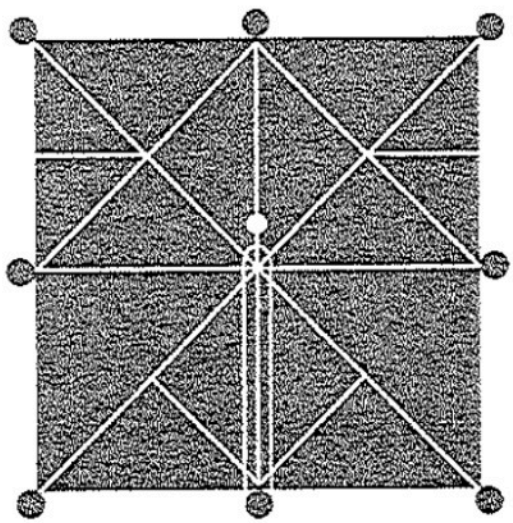
Most manuals[1] stipulate that the ground-plan of every Hindu temple must conform to a simple graph, similar to a yantra, called the Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala, which was also the model for early towns. This diagram is basically an imprint of the ordered cosmos and reveals the form assumed by the Universal Purusha as a maṇḍala in the phenomenal world (Vāstu = bodily existence or site; Purusha = Supreme Principle or source of the cosmos; maṇḍala = closed polygonal figure). The precise proportions of the Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala are not of importance since it is never an exact blueprint of the temple but a 'prognostication' or 'forecast' within which a wide



Four types of Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala. The centre is the seat of the principal deity, with auxiliary deities extending to the outer borders



Sthāṇḍila, Maṇḍala, an architectural yantra for South Indian temples, based on the divisions of the grid square



Kāmakalā Yantra, symbol of the unity of Śiva and Śakti. After the Śilpa-Prakāśa

range of possibilities of temple architecture is implied. The ritual diagram is an 'ideogram', while the temple is a materialization of the concepts it embodies.

The Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala is basically a square of squares but it can be converted into other primal shapes. The simplest arrangement consists of 64 (8 × 8) or 81 (9 × 9) squares, in which the nuclear central zone of 4 or 9 divisions is dedicated to the principal deity, Brahmā. Other, more highly complex, types can be elaborated by gnomic progression into 1,024 squares. When the maṇḍala is used architecturally its central zone locates the temple's womb-chamber. Around the nucleus, 12 squares are designated as seats of divinities, with specific reference to the 8 directions of space. These are surrounded by another 32 divinities associated with celestial bodies (28 lunar and 4 that preside over solsticial and equinoctial points).

Thus this simple graph-like diagram not only represents the energies of the directions of the compass but has astronomical connotations, providing a chart of cyclical revolution, of day, month, year, etc. These maṇḍalas, of which Hindu manuals of architecture provide thirty-two variations, are the earliest type of architectural yantras, contributing substantially to the rhythms, designs and conceptual basis of the Hindu temple.[2]

South Indian architectural yantras are generally constructed to reflect a different cosmic order. Three concentric squares create a hierarchy: the innermost is assigned to the Universal Being, the middle square is the sphere of gods, the outer square the terrestial region. Beyond the outer square are the creatures of the netherworlds. The Sthāṇḍila Maṇḍala of South India, however, resembles North Indian architectural yantras, being generally a composition of 49 squares.

Though architectural yantras are highly symbolic mathematical constructs they nevertheless provide certain practical indications. The Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala sets out the position of the devatā images in a temple, while its use in planning a town prescribes the town's orientation and the sites where temples are to be constructed. Before a temple is built, the ground is levelled, purified and consecrated, and the Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala is ritually drawn on the site. Thus 'the building draws its power from the Vāstu-Purusha [Supreme Principle] who lives at its base and converts, by his presence, the plan of existence [Vāstu Maṇḍala] into the shape of the Purusha, in whose likeness the temple is set up'.[3]

Śakti and Yoginī Yantras

Tantrism puts great emphasis on the use of yantras in temple architecture, especially for the construction of temples devoted to Śakti worship. Not only was the architectural yantra used as the basic inspiration for the plan and elevation of the temple, but yantras were actually incorporated into the fabric of the building. Yantras were, for example, laid into the foundation of the Garbhagṛiha and into important angles of the temples. Yantras also influenced the composition of the numerous sculptural images adorning the outer and inner temple walls (see below).

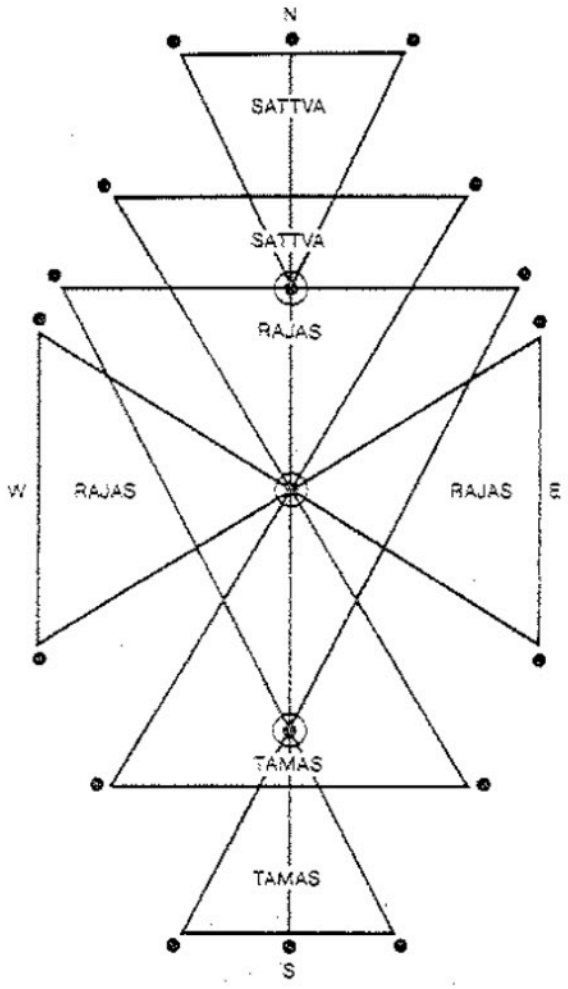
A recently discovered tantric manuscript from Orissa (*Śilpa-Prakāśa*, 9th–12th centuries) has thrown light on the distinctive features of the specifically 'left-hand'

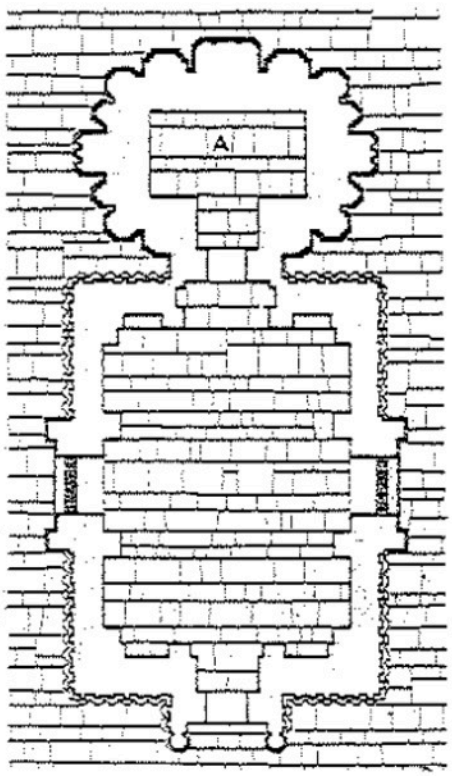
tantric Śakti temples and their architectural planning rituals. According to this manual, at the appropriate site a peg is placed in the ground, symbolizing the central axis of the universe and called 'the womb of the yantra' (yantra-garbha). A circle is drawn around the peg and ten cardinal points are marked off relating to the regions of space (the eight directions, the nadir and zenith), to each of which is assigned a specific divinity. These ten points determine the entire plan of the temple. The construction from the centre outwards parallels the construction of yantras for worship and meditation,[4] and the peg is analogous to the bindu.

The principal architectural yantra of Devī (Goddess) temples, as prescribed by the *Śilpa-Prakāśa*, is rectangular, as opposed to the square of the Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala. Whereas the square is a static form, with four fixed points, the rectangle of the Devī temples symbolizes the rhythmic continuity of the creative play of Śakti, and her invincible power over life and nature. The Yoginī Yantra, which is meant to be installed in Śakti temples, does not dictate the plan of the temple but reinforces the pre-eminence of Devī's power in a ritual during the construction of the temple. The Yoginī Yantra is drawn on the base of the womb-chamber, and then consecrated and worshipped by the priest. After these preliminary rites, it is covered over and laid into the foundations of the innermost sanctuary. The symbolic meaning of the Yoginī Yantra is as complex as that of the Vāstu-Purusha Maṇḍala, incorporating various elements of the tantric conception of the cosmos. Three points on the median line running north to south denote the threefold manifestations of Śakti exhibited through her threefold tendencies: sattva, rajas, tamas (purity or intelligence, energy, mass or inertia). Three rajas-triangles indicate dynamic activity behind creation, balancing the opposing forces: the ascending tendency, the two sattva-triangles at the top, the descending tendency, the two tamas-triangles at the bottom. The seven triangles stand for the attributes of the Devī, who is the primary source of all creation.

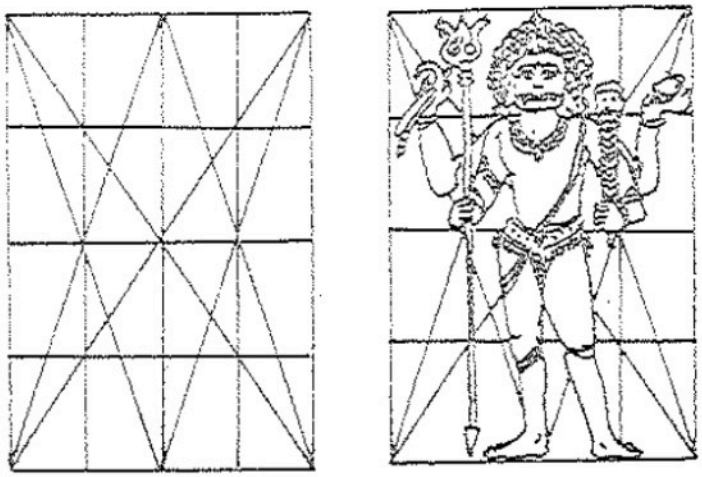
In the outer points of each triangle, a cluster of 64 goddesses, known as the sixty-four yoginīs, are invoked. These divinities represent the rhythmic cycle of day and night which is divided into 30 parts (muhūrtas) – 15 for day and 15 for night. Each muhūrta is presided over by two of these yoginīs, with two yoginīs each for dawn and twilight. The Yoginī Yantra is installed in the Vārāhi Temple (c. 12th century) in Caurasi, Orissa, where esoteric practices such as sexo-yogic rites, virgin worship, etc., were practised by the 'left-hand' tantrikas (Kulāchāras).

The use of yantras in tantric shrines dedicated to Śakti extends beyond prescription for the plan and preliminary rites. The esoteric aspect of the left-hand doctrine is vividly illustrated in the imagery of the Kāmakalā Yantra. This yantra, considered exceedingly potent, is either a square or rectangle, and has the Śiva emblem of the liṅga rising from the centre of the base line, around which there are sixteen yoni triangles, each presided over by a Śakti. Above the liṅga is a dot which is the abode of the Supreme Śakti, Mahā-Kāmakalesvarī. This yantra is considered necessary for every temple devoted to Śakti and Śiva, warding off any obstacle that may hinder the sādhanā of the worshippers in the temple. In addition, the Kāmakalā Yantra has an esoteric meaning, and was always to be concealed under the mithuna

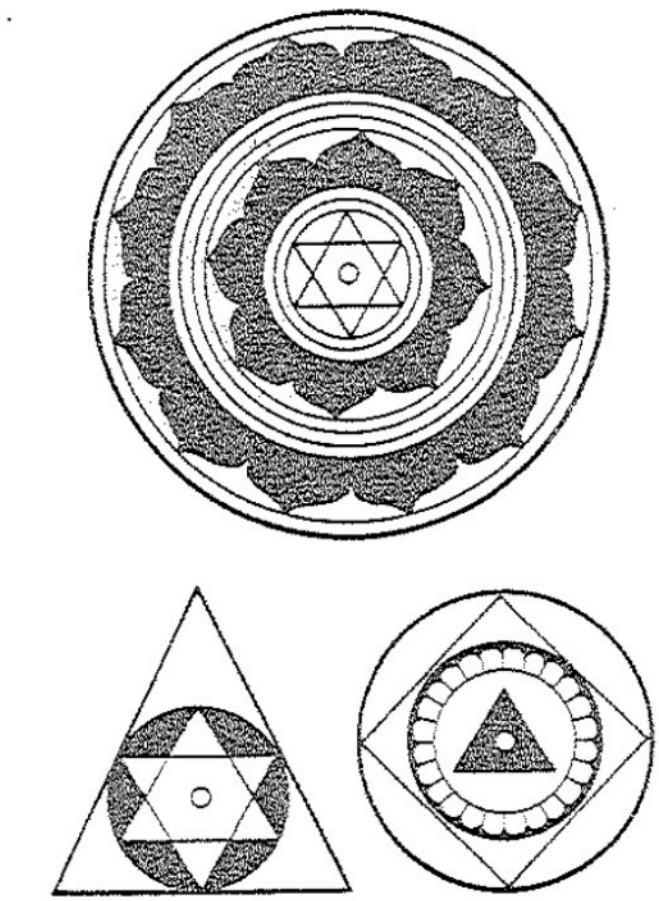




Yoginī Yantra, for tantric shrines devoted to Śakti worship, after the Śilpa-Prakāśa (top), and the Vārāhi Temple (above), where the Yoginī Yantra is laid in the foundation of the womb-chamber (A)



Bhairava Yantra, a compositional yantra of Śiva (left) and icon of Śiva superimposed (right). After the Śilpa-Prakāśa



Sūrya Yantra (centre) dedicated to the Sun God, with yantras of his two Śaktis, Chāyā (left) and Māyā (right). These yantras are imbedded below the cult image of Sūrya in the Padmakeshara Temple at Orissa. After the Maṇḍala Sarvasva, an ancient text on architecture

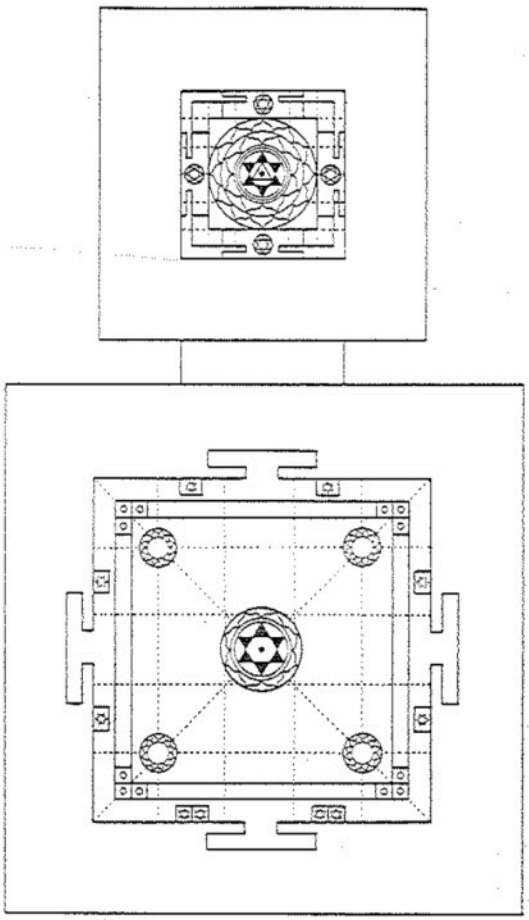
(amorous couple) images installed in the temple. This yantra expressed the quintessential philosophy of the left-hand practitioners, who believe that 'Desire is the root of the universe. From desire all beings are born. Primordial matter (Mūlabhūta) and all beings are reabsorbed again through desire,'[5] so the text concludes that a place without love-images (kāmakalā) is a 'place to be shunned'.

It has been mentioned above that in tantric temples yantras were applied to regulate the design and creation of the sculptures adorning temple walls.[6] Such 'compositional yantras' are not used for meditation or worship but to provide an abstract framework, based on mathematical proportions, which determines certain fundamental compositional principles for the execution of sculptures of devatās such as the ten Mahāvidyās, and especially for the presiding deities of tantric shrines. The basic schemes of the compositional yantras may be a grid of vertical, horizontal and oblique lines, with a central focus. It is on the basis of the line divisions of these yantras that the whole sculptural image is built up. Each type of yantra matches an image of a particular deity. We may infer the immense role yantras have played in tantric temple art.

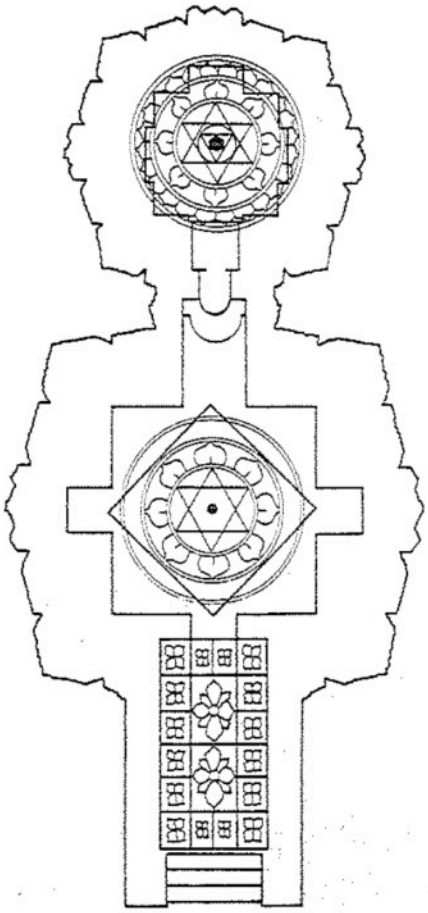
The Sūrya Pañcābja Maṇḍala and Navagraha Yantra

A particularly fine example of a temple based on and incorporating yantras is the magnificent Sūrya Temple in Konārak near Bhuvaneśvar in Orissa. This was built about AD 1240–80 in honour of Sūrya, the Sun God, source of all light, spiritual and earthly. Recent research[7] has shown that yantras were embedded in the pedestal of the presiding Sūrya image. The temple had two principal structures: a high tower (Vimāna), now in ruins, in which the cult image of Sūrya was placed, and a step-pyramidal assembly hall (Jagamohana) that led into the inner chamber of the sanctuary. The manner of construction of the yantra underlying the shrine, the Sūrya Pañcābja (=5 lotuses) Maṇḍala, and of worshipping its various devatās, is explained in a tantric manual:

> This Saurapañcabja Maṇḍala is greatly loved by Sūrya; it is made for the worship of Sūrya together with four other devatās. For this yantra a square has to be made with divisions and subdivisions, so that the whole field is divided into twenty-five parts.
>
> By tracing two diagonals the centre-point is found. Around the centre, a circle with eight sectors has to be drawn not exceeding the size of the central division.
>
> The lotus in the centre is eight-petalled; in the corners are twelve-petalled lotuses. . . .
>
> In the centre of this yantra is a bindu, and a hexagram inside the circle with an eight-petalled lotus.
>
> On the south side Gaṇeśa and Rudra, on the north side Ambikā and Vishṇu, are to be worshipped (on the small lotuses). Then, leaving a half-part of the outer square, a square is made with a karṇikā (ear) in each of the corners. In those karṇikās three bindus are to be made. Two are on the sides and one in the centre. On these three bindus the Sūrya Śaktis are worshipped.
>
> In the Agni (south-east) corner Dīptā, Sūkṣmā and Jayā; in the Nairṛtya (south-west) corner Vijajā, Bhadrā and Ūṣmā. In the Vāyu (north-west) corner Tikṣṇā, Vegā and Pracaṇḍa; in the Īśāna (north-east) corner Tāpinī, Svarṇāmśu and Akskārikā.
>
> These have to be worshipped with seed mantra Hrīṃ, with flowers, perfume and rice they have to be worshipped.



Ground-plan of the Sūrya Temple at Konārak showing the yantras underlying the womb-chamber (top, Sūrya Pañcābja Maṇḍala) and ceremonial hall (Mahā Sūrya Yantra). After the Maṇḍala Sarvasva



Three architectural yantras underlying the Mahā Gāyatrī Temple at Orissa, to represent three Śaktis of the Sun God, Sūrya. The circular yantra represents the goddess Gāyatrī who presides over morning devotions. She is the symbol of life, energy and creation. The square yantra represents the goddess Savitrī, Śakti of mid-day worship, and is the symbol of the consuming fire of dissolution. The rectangular yantra is of the goddess Sarasvatī who presides over the twilight hours, is worshipped in the evening, and represents sustenance and preservation of the universe. After the Trikāla Mahāmāyā Arcanā Vidhī

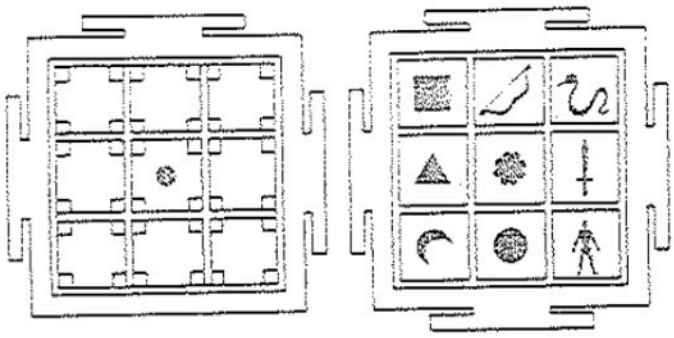
Again, in the second half of the square, the corners are to be left as they are, and one section by their side.

The Dikpālas [deities of the regents of space] have to be worshipped. On all four sides the bhūpura [outermost periphery] has projecting parts like portals. The Dikpālas are worshipped with their mantras in their proper places. Only by the side of the front Brahmā and Ananta have also to be worshipped.

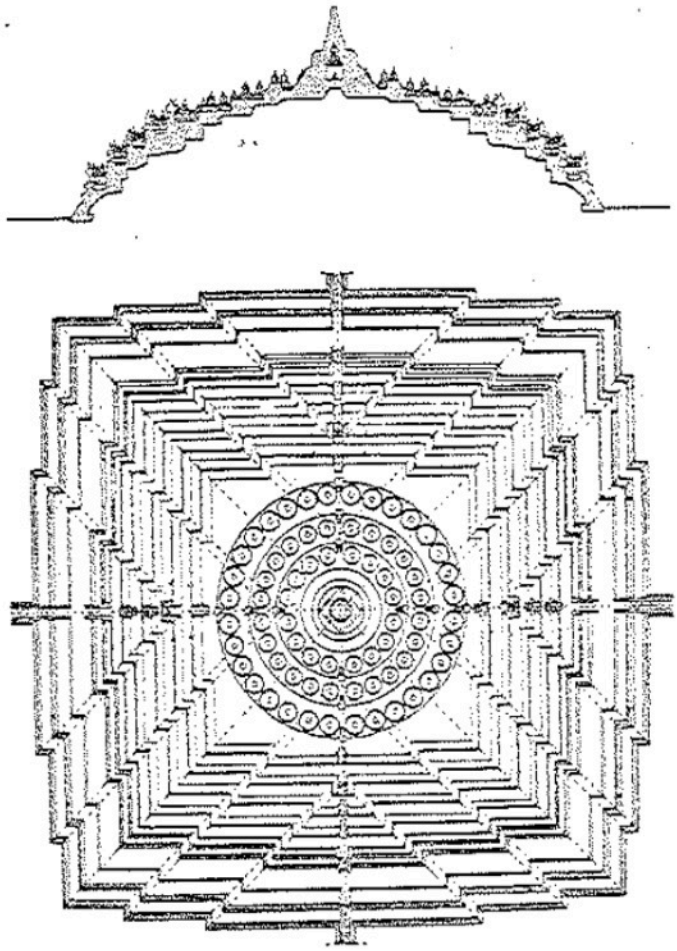
Sūrya pūjā is done in the centre with [Surya's Śaktis] Chāyā and Māyā.

The Smārtas [Brāhmins] worship the five Devatās on this place.

Hrīṃ bīja [seed sound] is for Sūrya, Klīṃ bīja for Vishṇu, Guṃ for Gaṇeśa. Śrī bīja is for Ambikā. Rudra is worshipped with the Rudra-mantra by the Smārtas.



Ground-plan of the Nāt-Maṇḍir in Konārak (left), corresponding to the divisions of the Yantra of the Nine Planets, or Navagraha (right). The symbols of the yantra are: square = Venus; bow = Mercury; snake = Ketu; triangle = Mars; lotus = the Sun, at the centre; sword = Rahu; crescent = the moon; circle = Jupiter; man = Saturn. After the Maṇḍala Sarvasva



Ground-plan and elevation of the Barabadur Stupa, based on the conception of the Śrī Yantra

When a hall is built for a sacrifice [yajña] to Sūrya it is to be built according to this yantra, including all the four circles, with an altar [vedikā] in the centre.[6]

The central axis of the temple as it was built coincides exactly with the centre of the yantra laid into its foundations, and an imaginary line drawn vertically upwards from the centre of the yantra would strike the apex of the monument. Similarly, the four small lotuses in the four corners of the maṇḍala correspond to the four pillars that still support the roof of the temple.

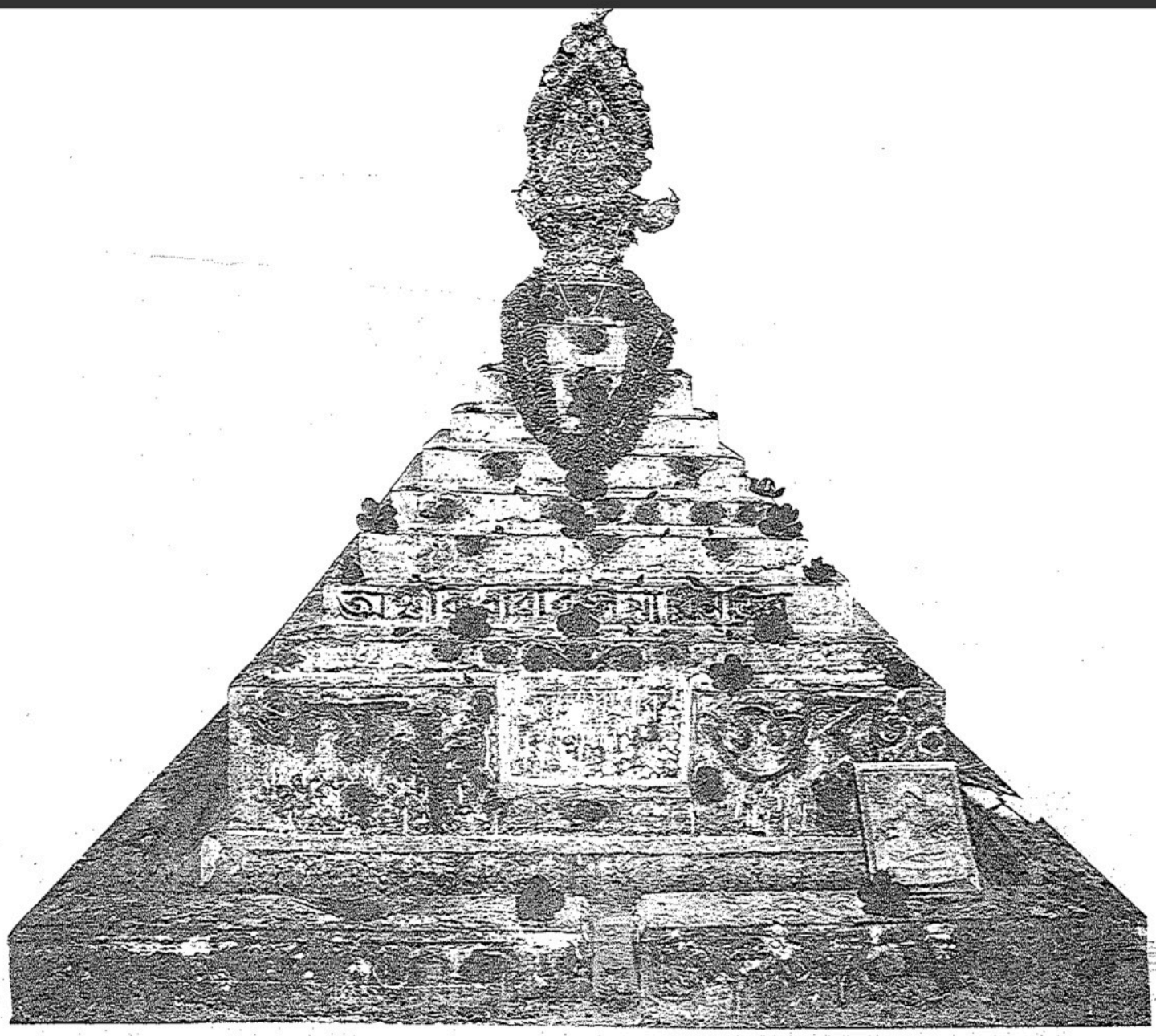
Adjacent to the main temple, a structure used as a ceremonial hall (Nāṭ-Maṇḍir) is based on the Yantra of the Nine Planets (Navagṛaha Yantra). As Sūrya is the Lord of Planets, his worship is always accompanied by the worship of celestial bodies and their revolutions. The yantra is a square grid of nine units, each compartment presided over by a planetary divinity, with Sūrya's place at the centre of the yantra. The Nāṭ-Maṇḍir is an architectural replica of the yantra, with the raised podium of its ceremonial hall divided into nine equal square compartments. The nine divisions are created by sixteen massive pillars, each of which stands at the corner of one or more squares. The Nāṭ-Maṇḍir was used for daily rites during which a portable image of Sūrya was placed in the centre of the platform, corresponding to the place assigned to Sūrya in the yantra, and worshipped at dawn when the rays of the rising sun fell upon it.

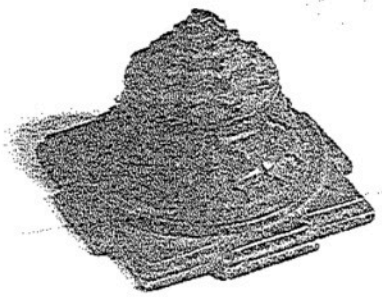
Stone maṇḍala

The relationship of yantra and architecture is especially close in monuments which may be called 'maṇḍalas in stone'. A striking example is the Buddhist Barabadur Stupa (8th century AD) in Indonesia, which rises like a terraced mountain with nine levels corresponding to the nine circuits of the Śrī Yantra. Built on a square foundation, with four doorways and five walled-in terraces, it has three circular structures with innumerable images of the Buddha. Finally, the ninth level is crowned with a terminal stupa which is the realm of the Supreme Buddha.

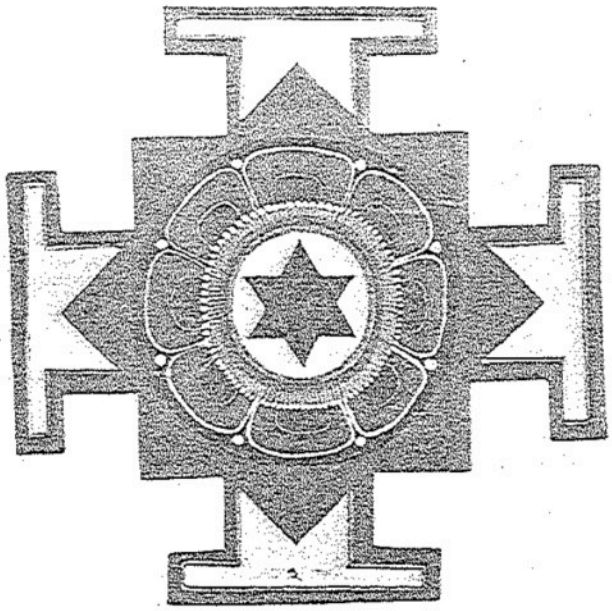
The Śrī Yantra itself is essentially three-dimensional, like a terraced mountain, and both yantra and stupa represent the cosmological scheme of the mythical 'world-mountain', Mount Meru. As Paul Mus[9] has demonstrated in his study of Barabadur, the internal design of the temple can best be understood through a description of the Śrī Yantra.

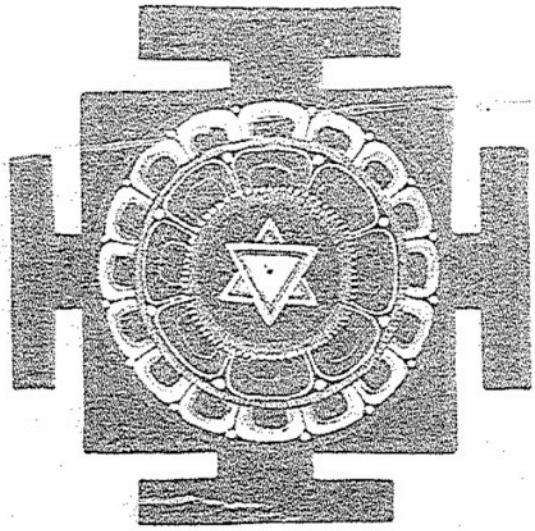
The Barabadur Stupa like the yantra is conceived as a place of spiritual pilgrimage. In the stupa the journey starts at one of the four doorways, and continues through the lowest galleries, which illustrate in relief scenes from the Buddha legends representing the world of desire and illusion. As the pilgrim moves in a spiral to the upper terraces which open out to the sky, the Buddha images become more and more abstract – a change which represents the transition from the world of matter to the world of the spirit. It parallels the sādhaka's journey from the material to the spiritual during meditation on the Śrī Yantra. Movement from the lower, outermost levels to the centre, the summit/bindu, is to be translated from the world of matter to the world beyond thought.

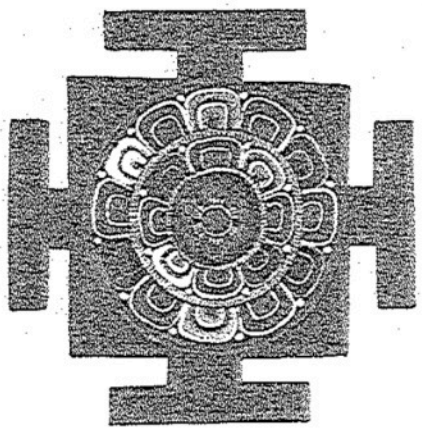


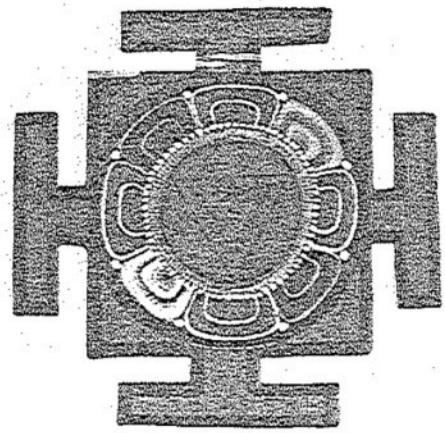


75, 76 Every step brings the sādhaka nearer to the spiritual goal. The nine ascending levels of a pyramidal brick structure in an ancient shrine in West Bengal (c. 15th century) have at their summit the sacred seat (pīṭha-sthāna) of the goddess. This imagery resembles stupa architecture (opposite) and the pyramidal form of the Śrī Yantra (left), each used for the journey of meditation from the material level of the base to the spiritual level of the bindu/summit. Rajasthan. 19th century. Bronze

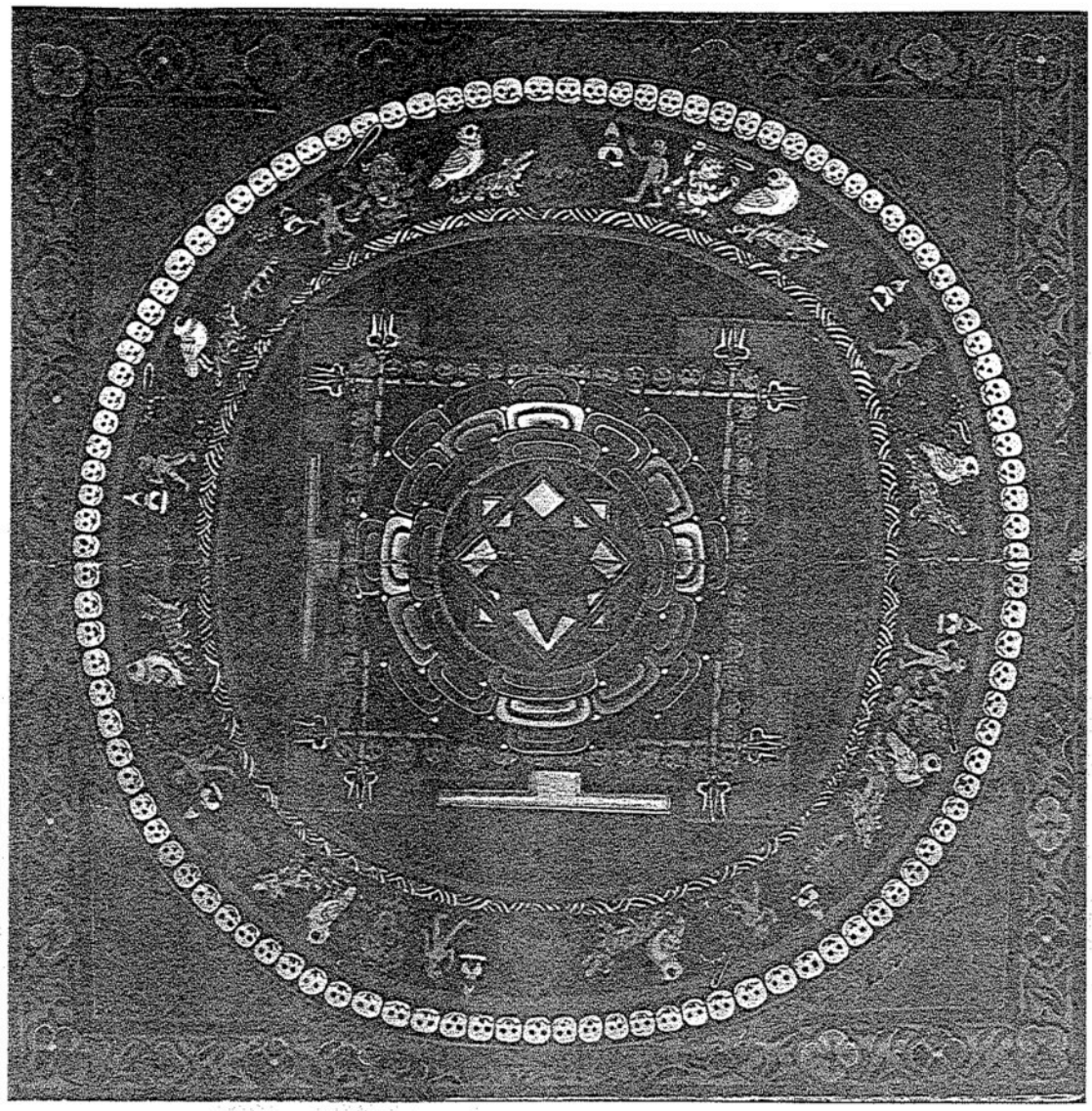




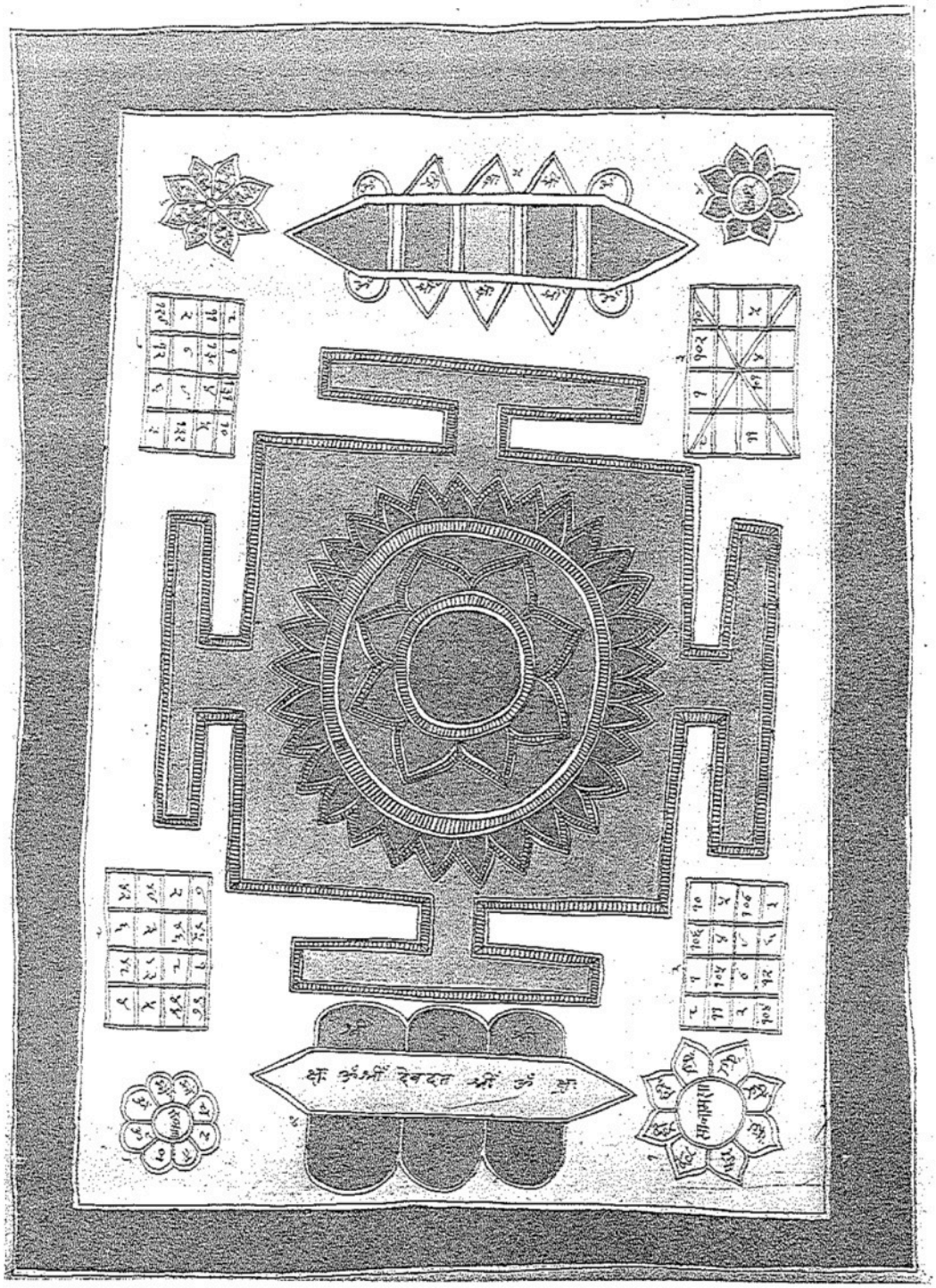




77–80 Yantras for meditation. Each graphic shape can be seen as a psychological schema: the outer gates are the gates of one's consciousness; the lotus petals, spiritual enfoldment; the inner geometrical figures, the stages of spiritual ascent; and the bindu, one's innermost self. Nepal, *c.* 1761. Gouache on paper



81 Guhya-Kālī Yantra, used for meditation: the power-diagram of one of the nine esoteric aspects of Kālī, with auspicious symbols. Nepal, c. 1761. Gouache on paper



8

Occult Yantras

Yantras concerned with magic formulae, divination and propitiation rites form a small but significant group among tantric mystic figures. Tantrism, a synthesis of many diverse elements, has assimilated during its history the entire corpus of yogic disciplines, along with its occult practices, magico-propitiatory and magico-defensive rites. Yogic sādhanā enables the yogi to tap hidden psychic sources in order to achieve mastery over nature. It is traditionally held that he could, for instance, increase and decrease in size, or become light or heavy; that he could cover vast distances at will, leave his body to travel space faster than the speed of light, call up the dead, enter the bodies of men, women, animals , and return again to his own body. So subtle are claimed to be the senses developed by the yogi that he could gain knowledge of distant worlds without ever visiting them.

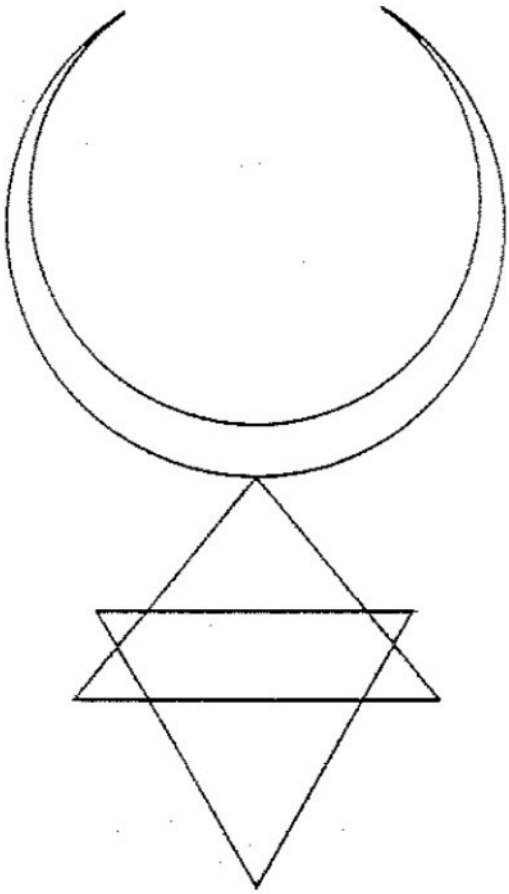
Among the most conspicuous sources of this esoteric occultism were tantric-yogic cults like that of the Nātha Saints, which originated in India around the seventh century AD. The Nātha cults combined a spiritual mysticism with paranormal practices such as multiplication of the body at will, resurrection from the dead, aerial visits and so on. Tradition has it that they achieved alchemical and healing powers by āsana (yogic postures), breathing techniques and ascetic disciplines.

Esoteric occultism also employed various non-physical aids such as graphic figures (yantras) and mystic chants (mantras), which take their inspiration from autochthonous spirituality. Hindu occultism can be traced to the *Atharva Veda* (c. 1000 BC), which preserves the early, non-Aryan traditions of India and was the ancient magical-propitiatory formulary.

In general, the whole theory of magical rites rests on the belief that there is an all-pervading, somatic, magic potency which can be transformed or divinized by means of spells, incantations and charms. The *Atharva Veda* indicates two types of cultic formula: the first, benign, is called 'atharvan' after the sage from whom the Veda derives its name; the second, malefic, is named 'aṅgiris', after another sage. Some scholars trace the ambivalence of the 'six rites' described below to this source.

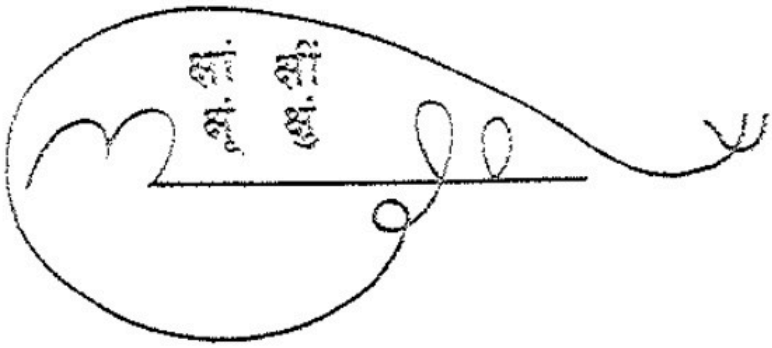
The occult yantra is distinguished from all other kinds of power diagram by its practical application and utilitarian ends. The primary purpose is to gain control over the forces of nature, for positive or negative ends, but mainly for the attainment of worldly rather that spiritual goals, especially those not easily attainable by secular or religious effort. As practical magic, occult yantras have played an important role in Indian rural life, and remain a living tradition.

The practices associated with occult yantras are kept a closely guarded secret and their knowledge is confined to priests and teachers, especially in village

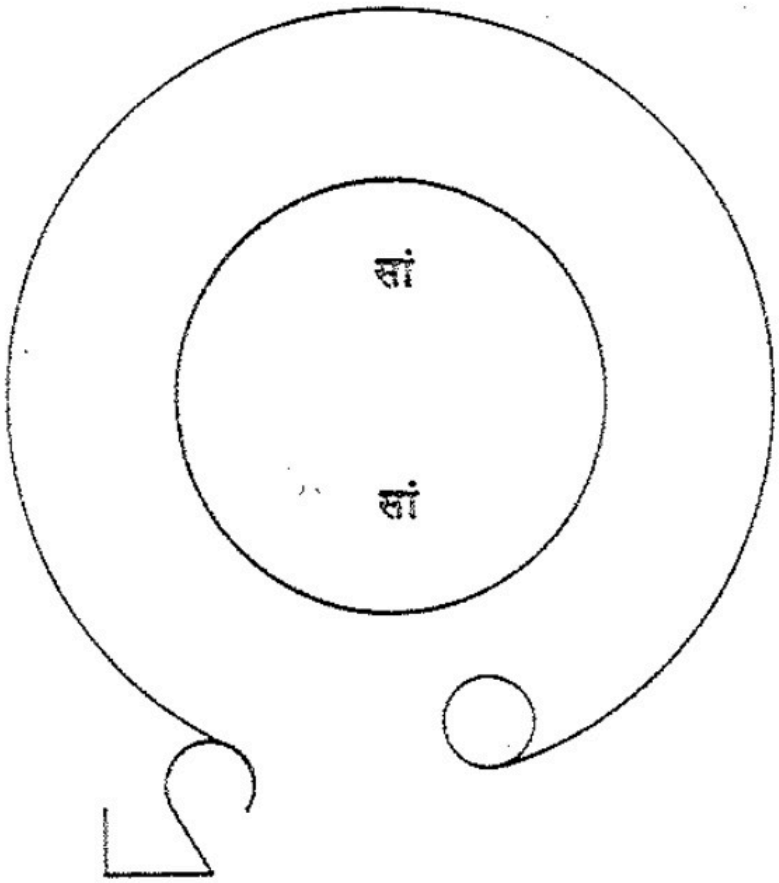


Manju-Ghosha Yantra which increases the talent for oratory and gives divine power. After the Tantrasāra

82 Occult yantras. The Agni Yantra (centre) is devoted to the Fire God (Agni) who devours ritual offerings, and is a symbol of the power through which man transcends the forces of nature. Top, from left to right, are diagrams for tantric magical rites to paralyse one's enemy, subjugate one's family, to enchant, and to bestow luck. Bottom, from left to right, are yantras to bring another under one's control, to ensure progeny, to entice one's husband, to paralyse another, and to give protection. Madhubani (Mithila), North Bihar state, contemporary images of traditional forms. Ink and colour on paper



Curative yantra to be inscribed on a gold plate and worn as a talisman. After the Saundaryalaharī



Occult yantra believed to cure diseases when worshipped ceremonially for forty-five days. After the Saundaryalaharī

communities. Despite this secrecy, which has resisted the dissemination of yantras as 'art', many of the diagrams are widely known. A number are illustrated and discussed in the Tantras and other texts. Square or oval thin metal plates, of gold, silver or copper, are often engraved or embossed with esoteric diagrams and mantras, and similar diagrams are inscribed on pieces of paper which may be rolled and carried as amulets.

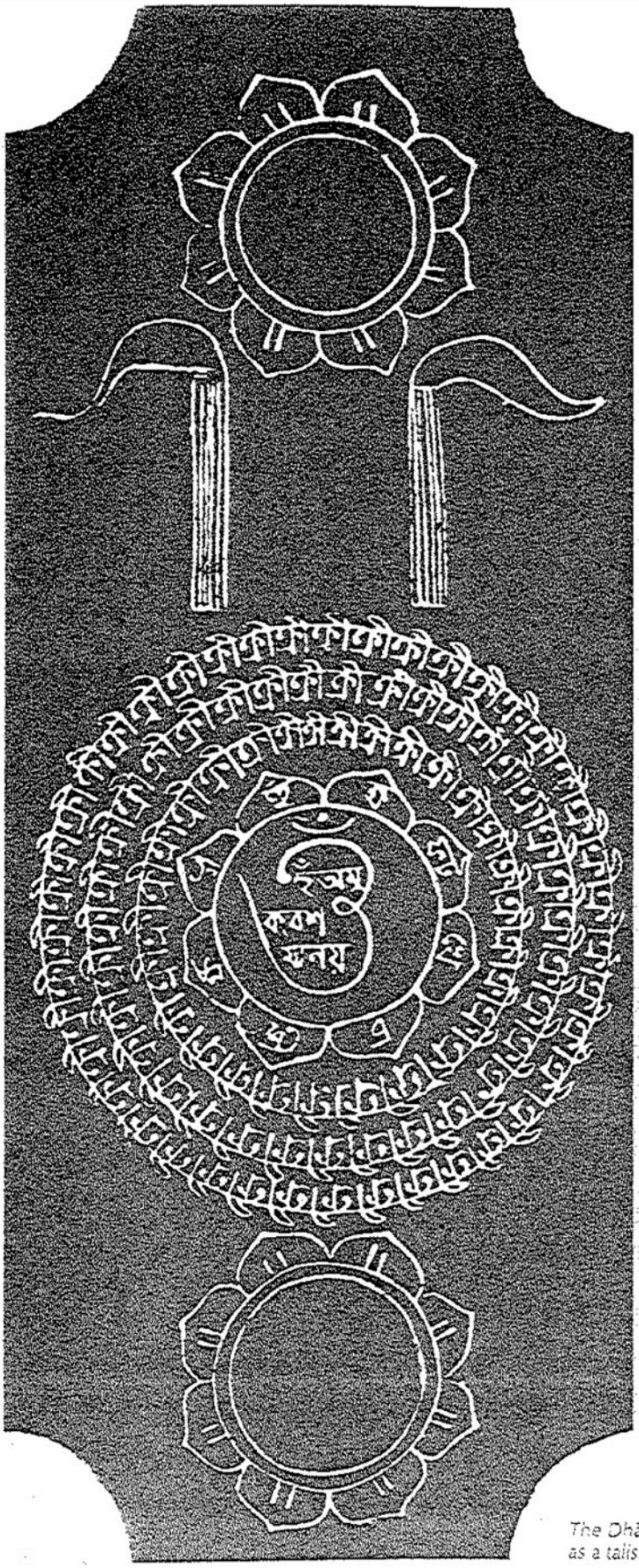
Some occult yantras are linear enclosures with the trident of Śiva at their angles. Line in the yantra is generally employed to create absolute symmetry and a total organization of space. However there is another type of yantra, usually occult, in which soaring trajectories are created by the eccentric movement of linear impulses in space. Line (ṛiju-rekhā) is the product of 'cosmic stress' and implies movement, flux and growth. Most traditionally, these yantras appear as a spiral around an invisible source, and are therefore to be associated with coiled Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, the energy of the subtle body. Others form eddies or curves, tracing wandering paths, or are intersecting ovoids, dissolving into space, mapping, as it were, the cosmic secrets.

The occult figures are not stereotypes but within the tradition vary endlessly. Each enclosure is a magical field in which power is circumscribed, controlled and used for occult proficiency. Each shape is a means to communicate with supernatural forces that work between heaven and earth. The forms and functions of the signs and diagrams are as many and individual as the human needs and purposes that they are intended to fulfil; and it is claimed that there is no wish that a yantra cannot satisfy. They are used for preventive medicine, as good luck charms, for exorcism, to ward off calamities, to gain wealth or learning, to enhance bodily charms, to restore alienated affection, to ensure conception or the birth of a son, to secure harmony and influence in the community, and so on.

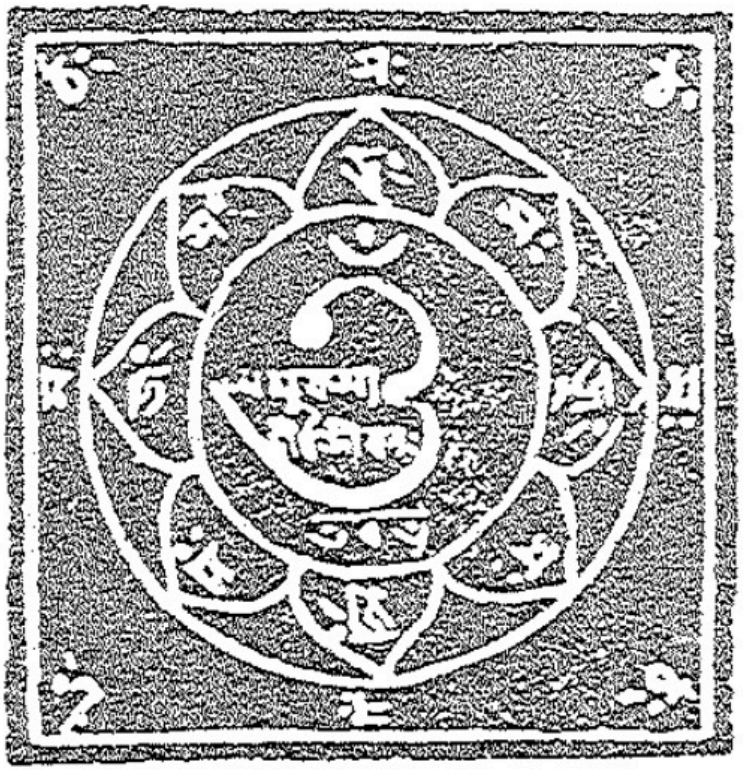
The *Saundaryalaharī*, an eighth-century Sanskrit work, mentions 103 yantras and gives their ritual prescriptions. For instance, the yantra to give relief from disease, debt, etc., is said to be a circle with the seed mantra Straṃ inscribed in the centre. This yantra is to be consecrated for thirty days, pronouncing a mystic formula three thousand times in order to procure the desired result. Another text, the *Yantracintāmaṇi* ('Thought Jewel'), is solely devoted to 80 occult yantras, which it is claimed grant all desires, conscious or unconscious. The *Kāmaratna Tantra* is another such occult text: it lists a large number of occult yantras and the rituals to accompany them.

Dhāraṇa Yantra

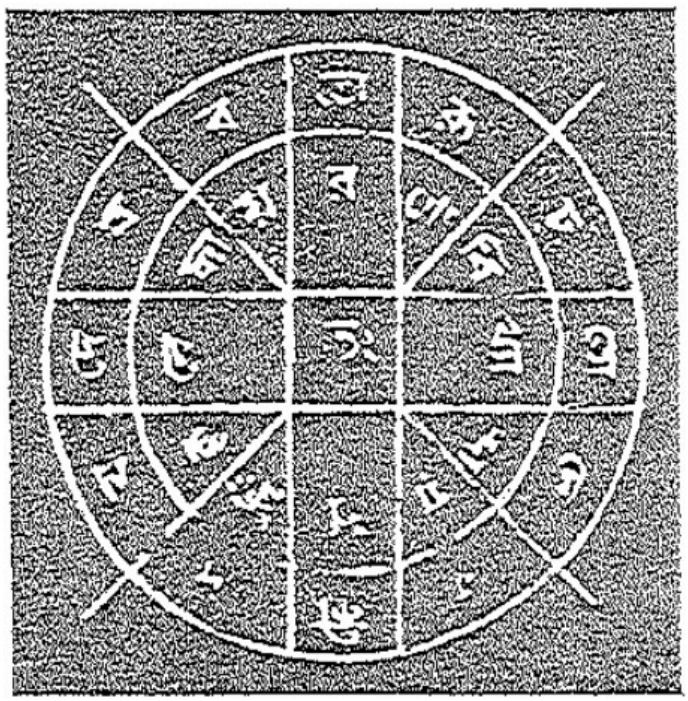
One of the most popular occult yantras is the Dhāraṇa Yantra. The Sanskrit word dhāraṇa means to protect, possess, hold, bear, a receptacle. Worn for protection, the yantra is given to the devotee after a priest has consecrated it in a life-giving ceremony. Sometimes highly advanced priests, to increase the efficacy of the yantra, exhale their breath on to it, an act which symbolically represents the transformation of the diagram into a sacred entity. By such symbolic rites (see Chapter 4) these yantras are permanently imbued with psychic force. A particular



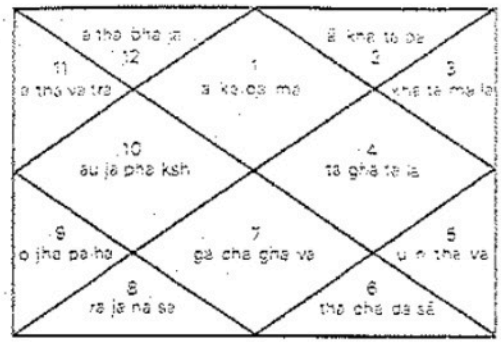
The Dhāraṇa Yantra of the goddess Tvaritā, to be worn as a talisman. After the Tantrasāra



Mṛitunjaya Yantra (of Śiva) which dispels fear, cures disease and brings fame and fortune. After the Tantrasāra



Ever-beneficent and auspicious Kṛishṇa-dhāraṇa Yantra. After the Tantrasāra



Akadam Chakra, with mystic syllables transliterated. The arrangement of letters is used to determine the appropriate yantra for the particular individual

Dhāraṇa Yantra is selected according to the needs of the individual petitioner. One means of assuring the appropriateness of the yantra is to match the seed mantra inscribed on the yantra with the first letter of the petitioner's name.[1] For this a diagram called the Akadam Chakra is drawn, with twelve 'houses' each inscribed with the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, arranged in a traditional manner and with a different combination in each house. The 'true' yantra for the person may be discovered by pairing the house in which the first letter of his name falls and the first letter of the seed mantra of the intended yantra. If the pairing is in the 3rd, 7th or 11th house, the yantra's mantra is considered to be beneficent; if in the 2nd, 6th or 10th house it is generally unlucky; and if it is in the 4th, 8th or 12th house, the match is held to be potentially disastrous.

Occult yantras often draw their power from the deities that are symbolically invoked in them. The *Tantrasāra*[2] specifies that the Dhāraṇa Yantra of the goddess Tvaritā, when inscribed on metal as an amulet, will relieve the ill effects of planetary influences, and subdue one's enemy. The Dhāraṇa Yantra called Nava-Durgā (of the goddess Durgā surrounded by a Śakti-cluster of nine deities), when tied by a thread around the arm or neck, prevents suffering from disease: the yantra of the goddess Lakshmī grants fame and wealth, and removes all dangers and anxieties. Similarly the Dhāraṇa Yantra of Kṛishṇa is considered to be all-beneficent; that of the goddess Tripurā-Sundarī enhances one's physical charm and beauty; the Mṛitunjaya (a name of Śiva) Dhāraṇa Yantra is said to cure disease, conquer fear and sufferings, and bring luck and fame to the seeker.

Metals, the materials of many occult yantras, are said to derive their power from particular planets: silver, a 'fragment of the moon', is believed to soothe fevers, cool the nerves and to draw its potent influences from the moon: copper draws its power from Mars, and copper Dhāraṇa Yantras have healing powers: gold is called a 'fragment of the sun', and is considered a perfect embodiment of sattva (equilibrium, truth, purity) and grants protection and good fortune.

Curative and prophylactic yantras

Certain yantras that serve as cures are drawn directly on the body of the afflicted subject. This practice is widely prevalent among the 'medicine-men' (Ojhās) of Mithila, the ancient kingdom in Bihar state, northern India. In the case of a scorpion

sting, the yantra is drawn symmetrically around the injury with an iron pointer, while chanting the appropriate mantra. The place of the sting becomes like the bindu of the yantra. The drawing of the yantra is repeated in mathematical proportion around the central yantra on the sting until the poison is neutralized and the sufferer is cured. In the case of snake bite, similarly, a yantra is drawn as concentric rings with an iron pointer, and this is believed to arrest the spread of the poison in the body.

The linear womb-shaped yantra called Chakra-vyūha, resembling a maze with a single opening at the top, is used in childbirth to ensure an easy delivery. At the appropriate hour the yantra is propitiated by the occult priest, who urges the woman mentally to enter the opening of the yantra and follow its zigzag course in deep concentration, completing each of its circuits and then reversing the course to return to the entry gate. Apart from the occult significance of the rite, the mental 'walk' through the yantra makes the subject circumambulate her own womb and helps her to use her mental powers to assist the birth.

A type of occult yantra based on arithmetical progression is the 'magic square'.[3] In the Tantras, such squares are often referred to as yantras because they possess mystical properties. A magic square is generally a chessboard figure in which numbers are so arranged that the sum of digits, no matter in which direction they are added, is always the same. One of the principal sources of the magic square is a mathematical treatise, the *Gaṇita Kaumudi* (AD 1356), in which an entire chapter discusses the construction of these squares with an odd or even number of cells.

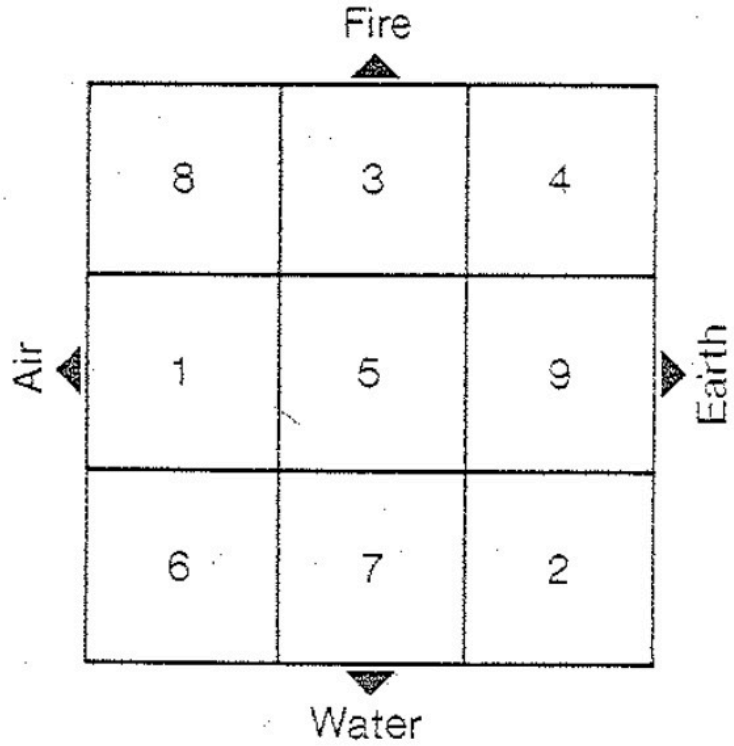
The simplest type of magic square, said to be all-beneficent, is based on the magic power of the number 15. In this yantra, numbers from 1 to 9 are placed in the specified order within nine squares, of which four squares represent the elements. To cure cold, the numbers are written beginning from the 'fire square'; to cure fever, from the 'water square'; to effect the speedy return of a person from a distant land, from the 'air square'. It is believed that if the yantra is drawn with sandal paste or saffron on paper and worn as an amulet, its effect will be unfailingly beneficial.

The magical 'six rites'

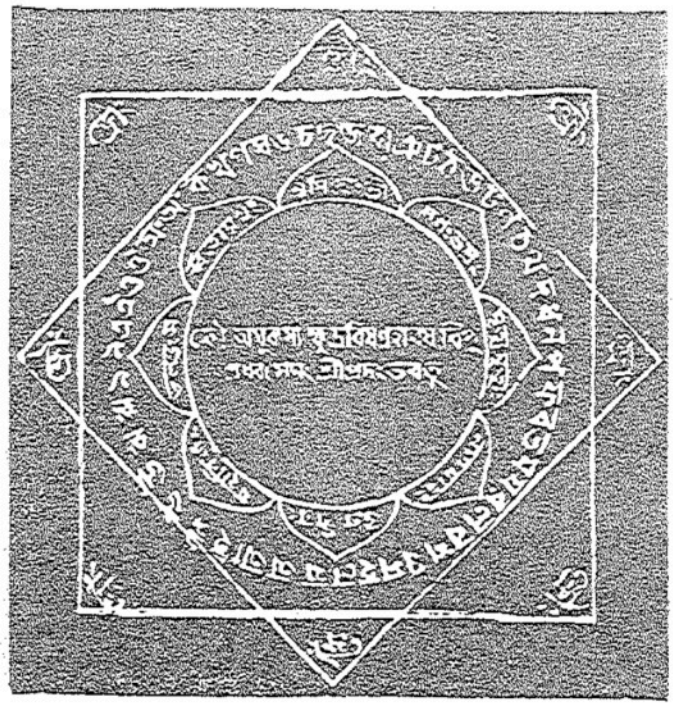
In contrast to the uniformly beneficent Dhāraṇa Yantra, the tantric concept of polarity is embraced in the yantras associated with six magical rites – Ṣaṭkarma – in which the first one, Śhānti, a peace-bestowing rite, serves to counterbalance the ill effects of the other five, malefic, rites.

First: the Śhānti rituals and yantras grant protection from the ill effects of planets and curses, cure diseases and dispel fears. Second: Vashikaraṇa grants the power to attract and bring under one's control men, women, gods and animals, and have one's desires fulfilled through them. Third: Staṃbhaṇa lends the power of preventing or restraining another's actions. Fourth: Vidveṣana grants the power of separating friends, relatives, lovers. Fifth: Uccāṭan transmits the power to uproot. Sixth, Māraṇa grants the power to kill. The rites have been given a doctrinal basis, and are ascribed symbolic associations with deities, compass directions, mantras, elements and colours:

Chakra-vyūha, a maze pattern used to focus concentration during childbirth



Magic square based on the occult number 15



Narasiṁha-dhāraṇa Yantra, intended for the destruction of enemies and to overcome the negative aspects of planetary influence. After the Tantrasāra

Rite	*Deity*	*Direction*	*Element*	*Seed mantra*	*Colour*
Śhāntikarma	Rati	NE	water	Raṃ	white
Vashikaraṇa	Vāni	N	fire	Raṃ	red
Staṃbhaṇa	Ramā	E	earth	Laṃ	yellow
Vidveṣana	Jeṣṭhā	SW	ether	Haṃ	mixed
Uccāṭan	Durgā	SE	air	Yaṃ	black
Māraṇa	Bhadrakālī	SE	fire	——	ash

Tantric sources often warn of the danger that malefic yantras present to the initiator by inhibiting his spiritual quest. Power used for destruction is to be shunned. The use of these yantras is considered a lower form of spirituality, and tantric sources[4] declare that sādhanā of such types of occult yantra is never a vehicle of enlightenment, but a direct obstacle to any form of spiritual attainment.

Energizing the occult yantra

The effectiveness of occult yantras depends upon the power of the guru, priest or whoever performs the rites associated with them and their consecration. His power depends upon his knowledge of esoteric practices, his self-discipline (tapas) and his moral character. The *Yantracintāmaṇi* declares that the person who performs these

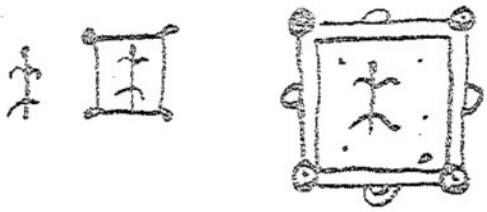
Śiva-dhāraṇa Yantra which prolongs life and bestows wealth. After the Tantrasāra

rites must have faith, for if there is a loss of faith, the effect of the yantra will not merely diminish but will be the exact opposite of what is intended.

According to the *Yantracintāmaṇi*,[5] to consecrate such a yantra the officiant should, with a pure mind, draw the yantra in a lonely spot. He should then consecrate it with the appropriate mystic incantations for three days, during which he is to remain celibate and sleep on the ground. The efficacy of the yantra can be gauged if during these three days he dreams: certain dreams are said to be premonitory of the accomplishment of the yantra's desired end. Auspicious dreams that indicate the presence of power (siddhi) to procure a desired end are dreams of association with women, of enjoyment on a mountain-top or in a royal palace, of a procession of elephants, of the singing and dancing of women, of rejoicing in festivals. Some inauspicious signs are seeing black soldiers, a state of anarchy, peril from fire, air or water, the death of a friend.[6]

The power of the yantra is often attached to a substitute or symbol. In the cure of diseases, the power to heal may be transmitted through the magic yantra and mantra by transferring that power to an inanimate object, a stone for example. Generally, the name of the person whom the yantra is intended to harm or benefit is inscribed in the centre of the yantra. The name or some of the syllables of the name may be included at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the mantra; in the case of yantras granting prosperity, the mantra is added after each syllable of the name; if a yantra is intended to attract or fascinate another person, two sounds of the mantra are intoned, followed by two syllables of the name of the person to be attracted.[7]

In 'black' magic rites, the transmission of power is achieved by the 'principle of mimicry': by acting out a desired event. Thus a small figure will be made from clay taken from a spot where an individual has stood, resembling him as closely as possible, and will be consecrated surrounded by malefic yantras.[8] Sometimes, a yantra may be consecrated at crossroads, symbolically the *axis mundi*, and left there overnight in the hope that the affliction which has been transmitted to it will be passed on to the person who treads on it.



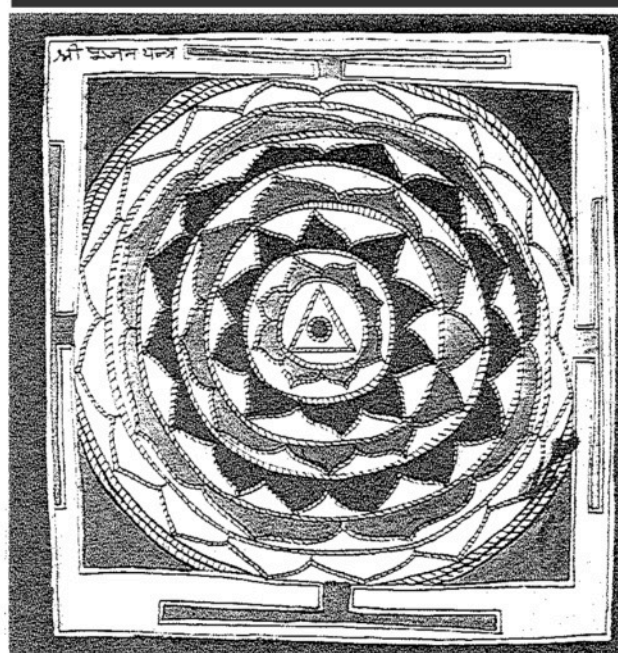
Yantra drawn on the walls of shrines dedicated to the goddess of children, Bāladevī, by women desiring children

The use of magic rites and magic yantras has particularly persisted in the rural communities of India. A great variety of yantras and auspicious signs are to be found, drawn on mud walls and the floors of huts. They are never applied for decorative purposes, but to cure and protect, to avert evil influences and hostile spirits. An interesting example of such a 'folk' yantra is associated with the number 5, which has a magical potency deriving from the powers of the five elements. It is generally drawn with five dots on the entrance or the sides of the door frame, or as a pentagon made without lifting one's finger. The Bhils, a tribal community in western India, draw five parallel lines girdling the outside walls of their huts to frighten away the evil eye; palm-prints (hastakāra-yantra), equilateral triangles and the swastika are all similarly used to ward off dangers and calamities and to counteract the power of the evil eye. The red of earth and the yellow of turmeric powder are generally used as auspicious colours, whereas the application of lamp-black is considered as an antidote to the power of evil.

The proven efficacy of occult yantras may be explained in psychological terms. To an individual who wears a yantra as a talisman, the diagram becomes a point of inner focus. It marks a sacred spot on his body where power manifests. He may even identify his entire being with the symbolic strength of the diagram. He believes that the diagram is a total embodiment of sacred power of the mysterious universe – the 'presence' of a divinity who dwells with him, albeit in him through the figure. Ultimately the empirical efficacy of the yantra is brought about by his own will-power, working through faith.

Practising siddhāis, on the other hand, give another explanation for occult esoterism. The Tamil siddhāis, for instance, explained their magical feats as a kind of 'game' with antimatter, claiming to believe (like the modern scientist) that there is another universe of antimatter, qualitatively different, with its own laws which govern occult practices. By reordering the arrangements of atoms with the aid of mantra chants, any process of nature can be brought under human control. Might there be another dimension of the universe, to which the siddhāis had access, and which modern man now seeks to rediscover?

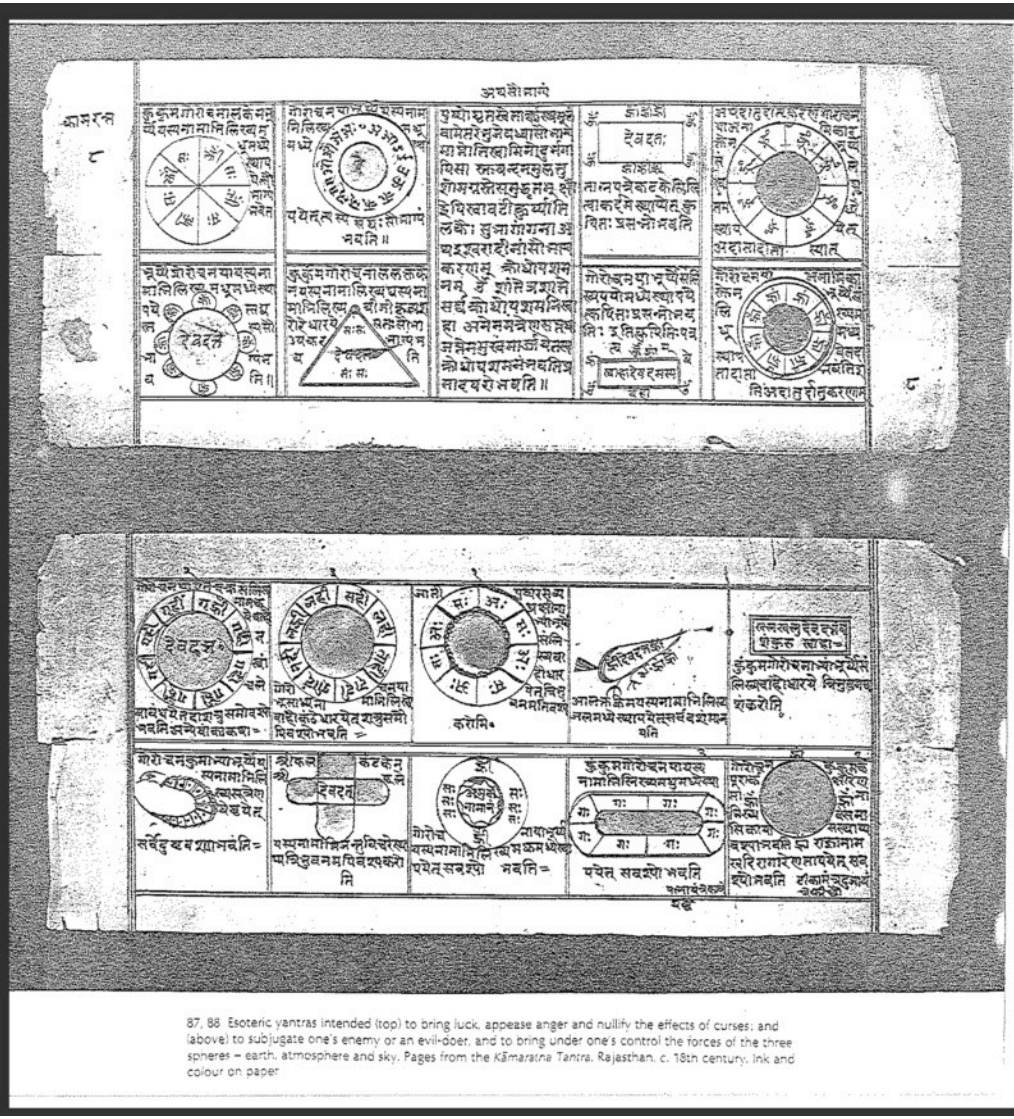
83–86 Four occult yantras. Top left, yantra of the goddess Śrī, bringer of good fortune and plenitude, invoked in her yantra to attain all one's desires. Top right, Bālādhāraṇa Yantra, dedicated to the goddess as a young maiden, who protects against calamities if her yantra is rolled into an amulet and worn around the arm or neck. Bottom left, Bandhanmoksna-karana Yantra, a talisman to give release from bondages such as disease, pain, or the evil eye. The heads around the square band are to scare away spirits and negative vibrations. Bottom right, a yantra to confer immortality and to prolong active life. Madhubani (Mithila), North Bihar state, contemporary images of traditional forms. Ink and colour on paper


श्री सज्जन यन्त्र

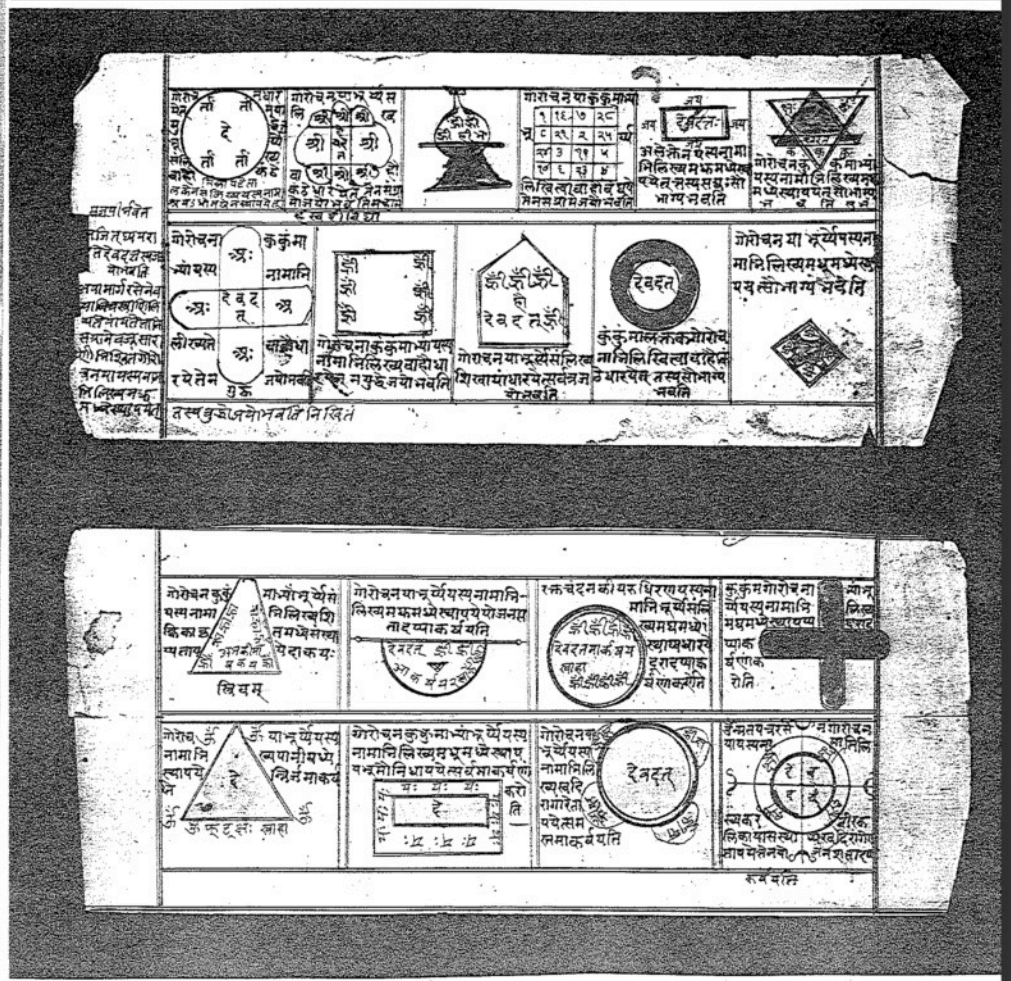
आधारणयन्त्र

बन्धनमोक्षकरं यन्त्रम्

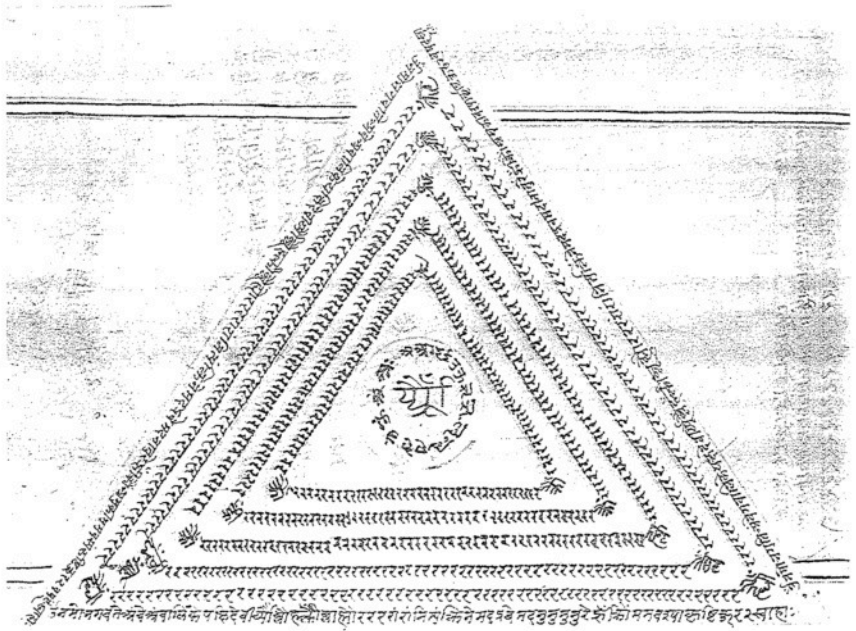
मृत्युंजयाख्यं मृत्युहरकरयन्त्र



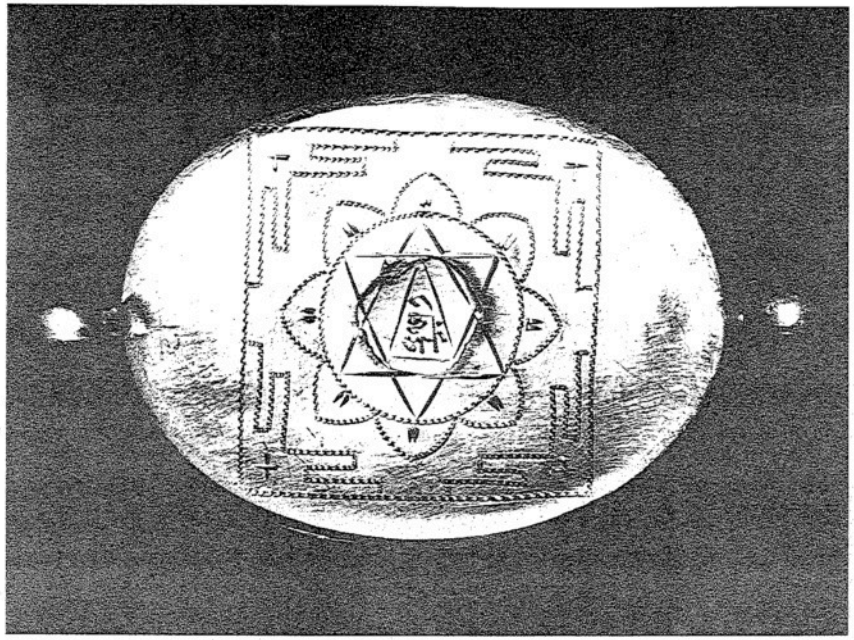
87, 88 Esoteric yantras intended (top) to bring luck, appease anger and nullify the effects of curses; and (above) to subjugate one's enemy or an evil-doer, and to bring under one's control the forces of the three spheres – earth, atmosphere and sky. Pages from the *Kāmaratna Tantra*. Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Ink and colour on paper



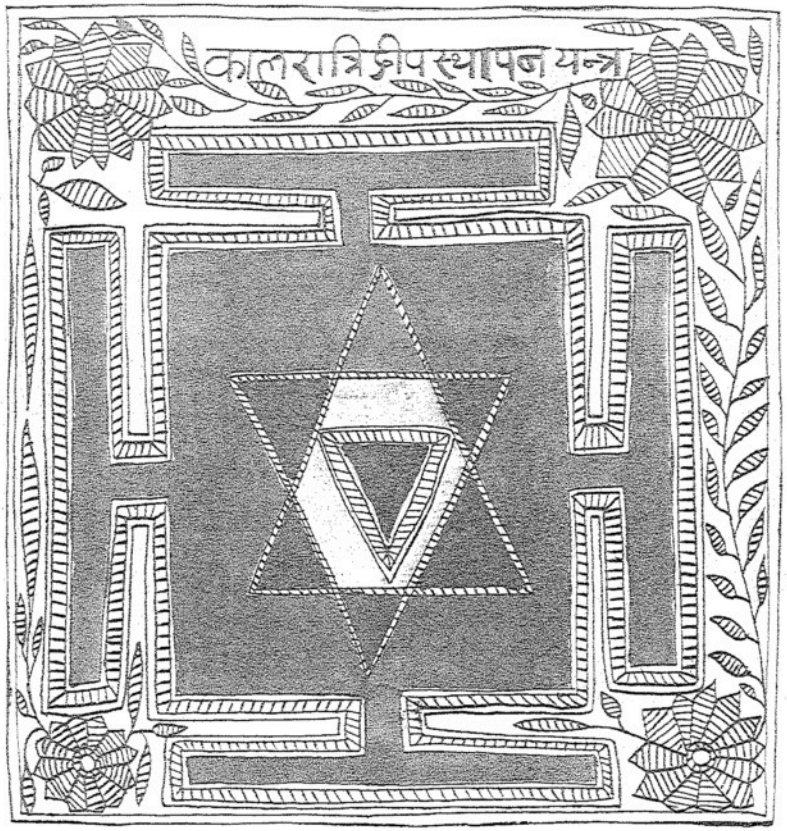
89, 90 Esoteric yantras intended (top) to conquer the evil forces of nature, when drawn on level ground or paper in yellow or red while chanting appropriate mantras; or, when worn as a talisman, to safeguard against hazards and evil spirits; and (above) to attract, entice and infatuate the opposite sex from far away. Pages from the *Kāmaratna Tantra*. Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Ink and colour on paper



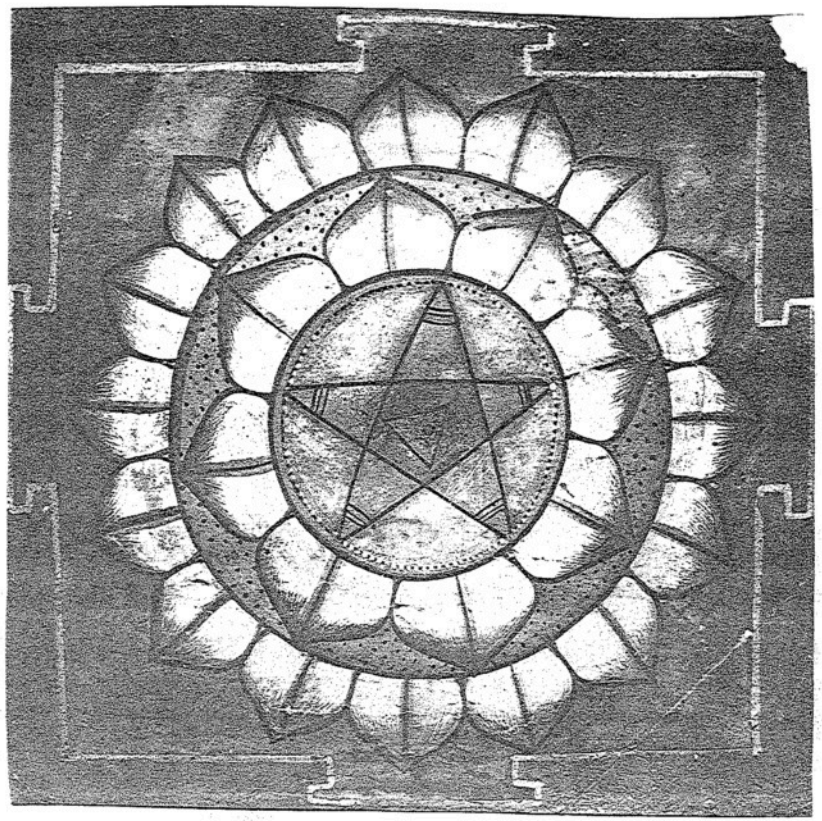
91 Yantra to subjugate, formed of cryptic mantra syllables in order to conceal its significance from the uninitiated. Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Ink and colour on paper



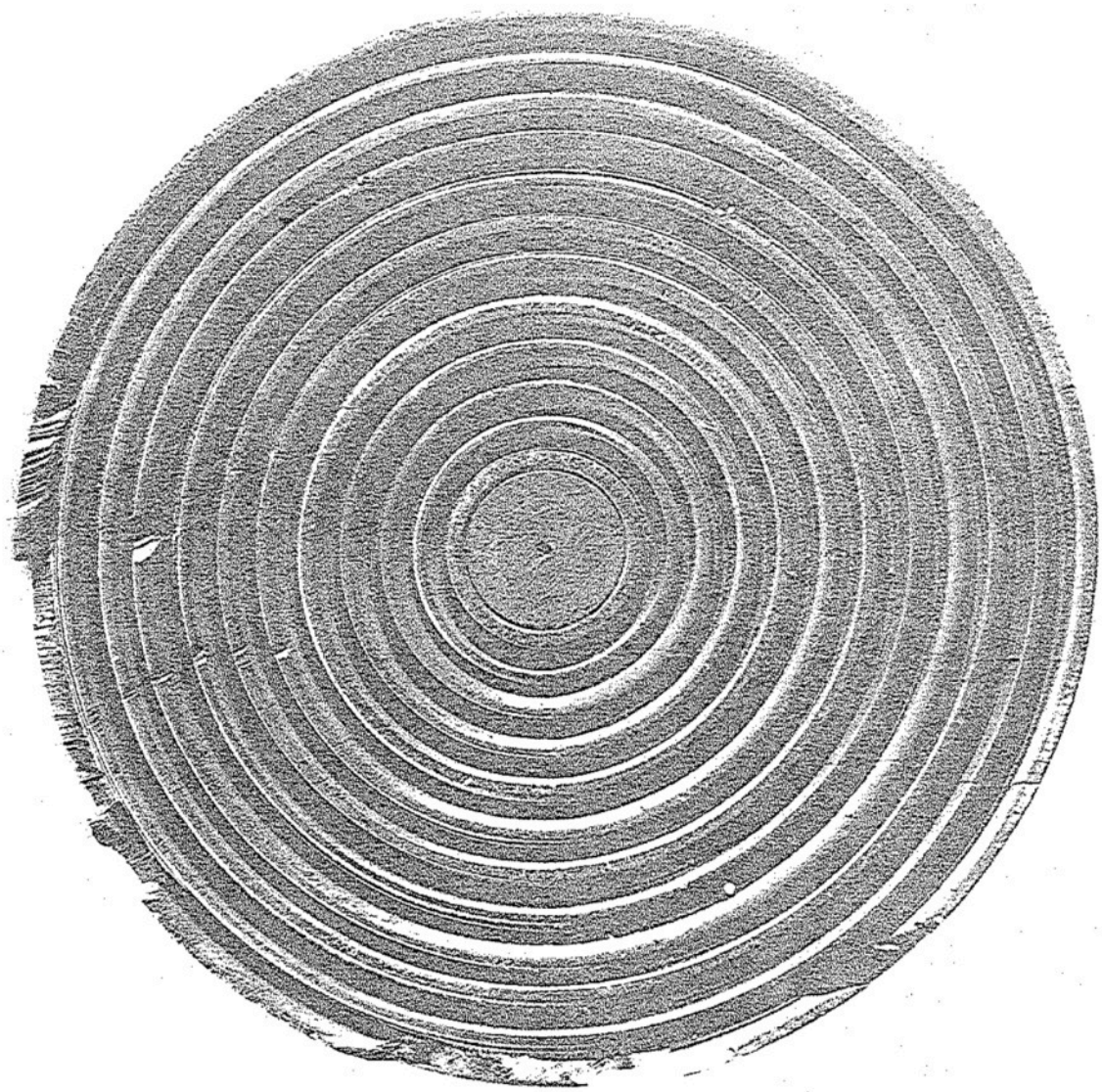
92 Yantra of Mahāvidyā Bagalā-mukhī on silver, considered to be a 'fragment of the moon': an amulet to be worn on the neck or arm to protect and promote well-being. Kalighat, Calcutta. Contemporary image based on traditional forms



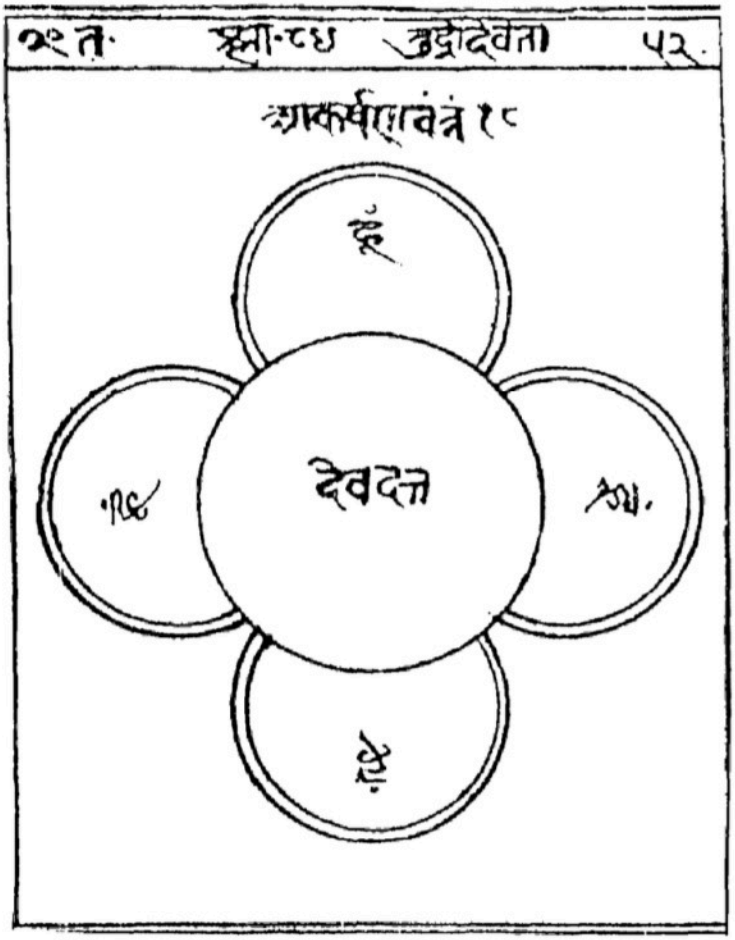
93 Yantra of the Goddess, to be worshipped at night for occult proficiency. Madhubani (Mithila), North Bihar state, contemporary image based on traditional forms. Ink and colour on paper



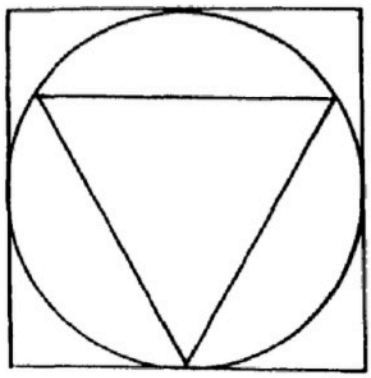
94 Shyām-Kālī Yantra with magic pentagon symbolizing the five elements – earth, water, fire, air, ether – which may be vitalized as a safeguard against destruction, evil and sin, and for good fortune. Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper



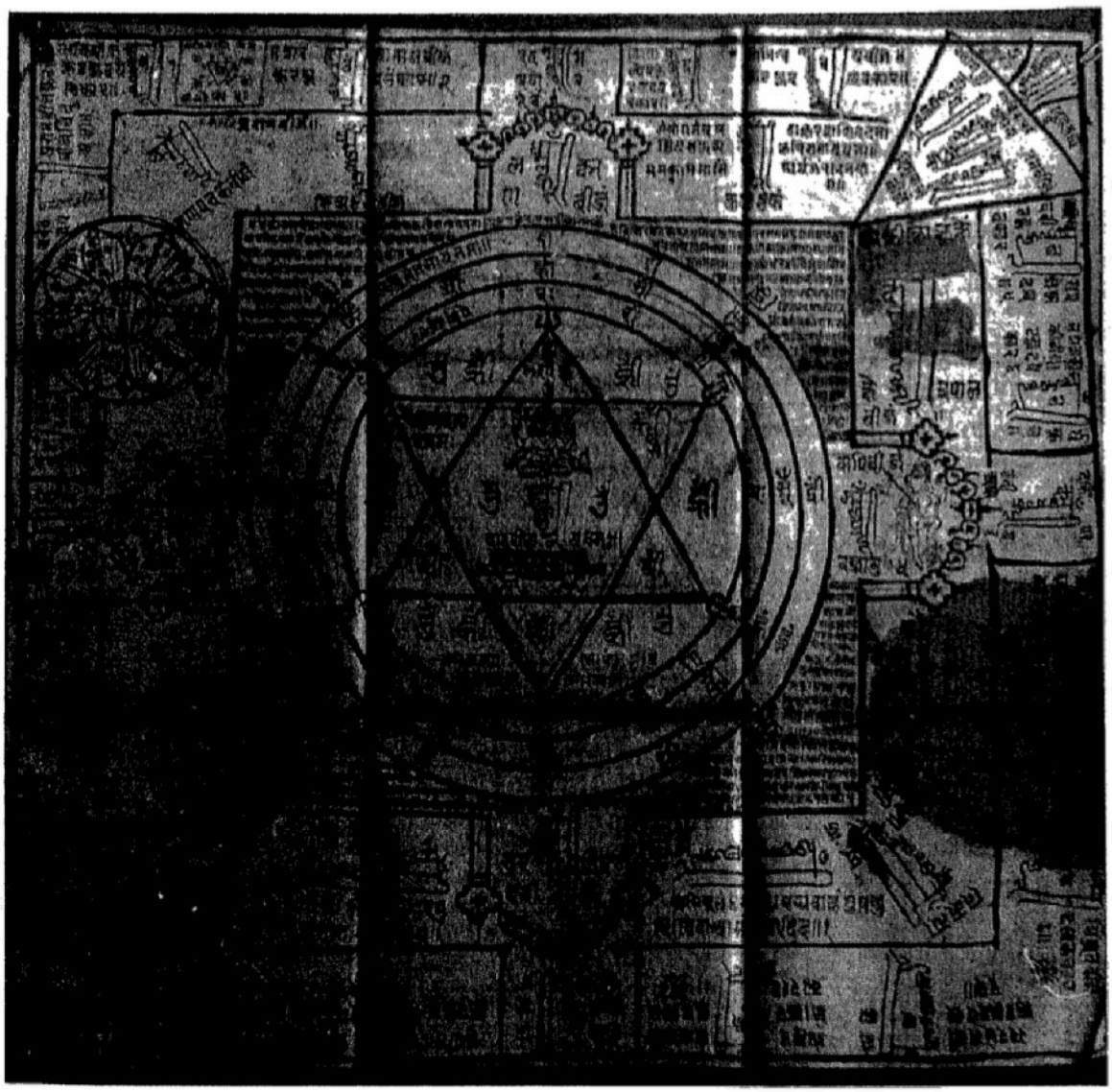
95 The bindu, sacred point of origin and return, with concentric circles symbolizing the eternal cycles of cosmic evolution and involution. The goal of the adept is his own involution to the centre, the ultimate point of psycho-cosmic integration, where he discovers his link with the Whole. Andhra Pradesh, c. 19th century. Wood



1. A yantra for attraction (*ākarṣaṇayantra*)

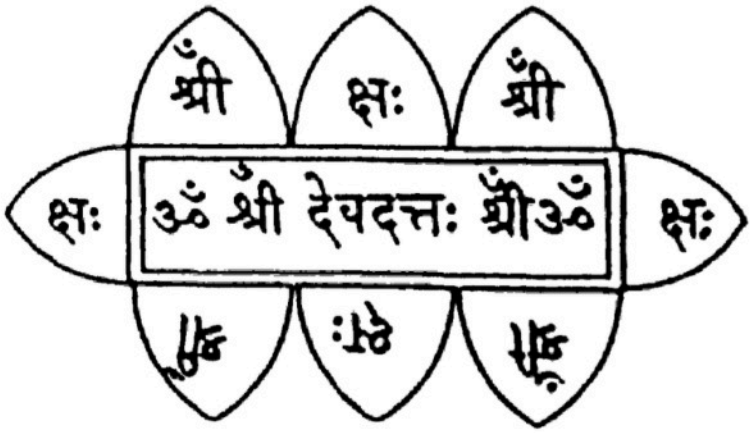


2. A supporting maṇḍala for the *vardhanī* vessel

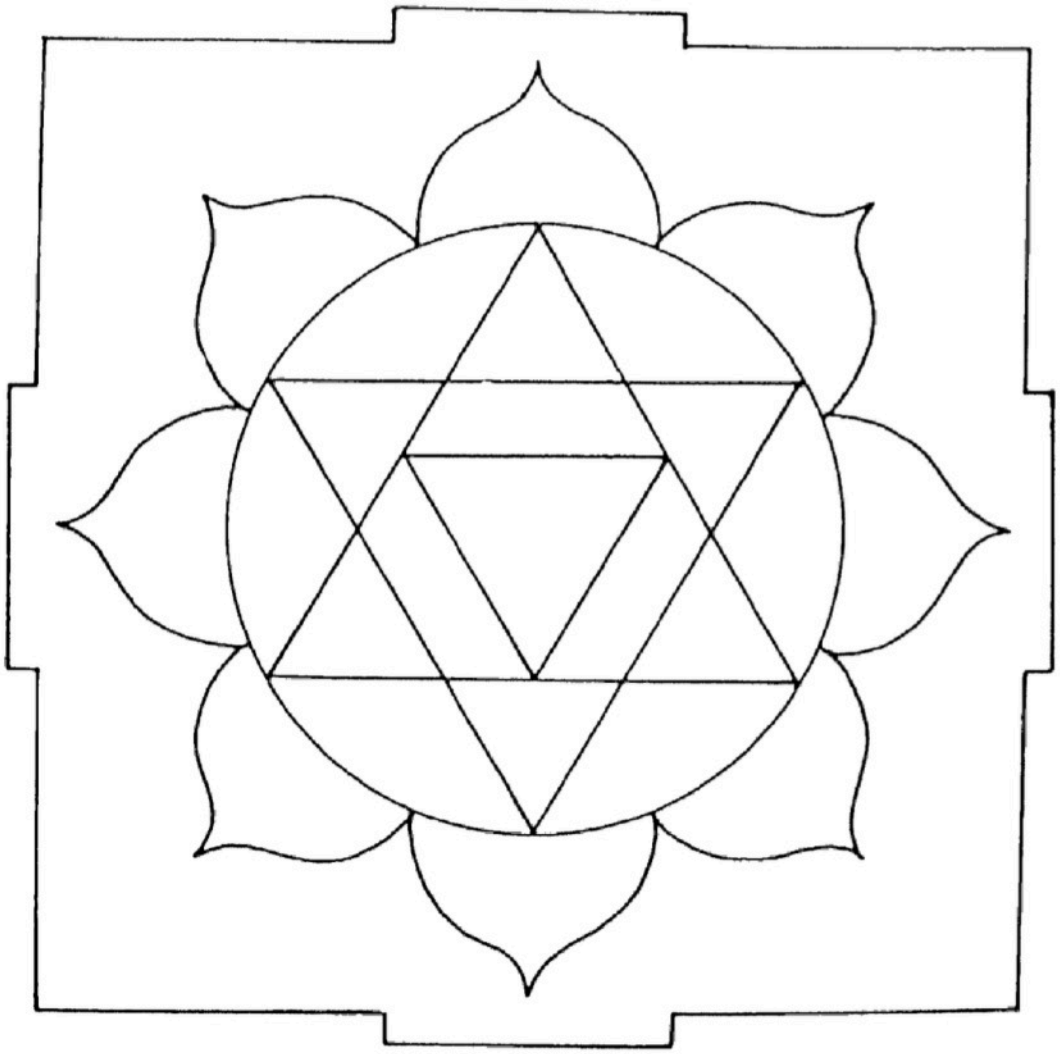


3. A yantra with the Rāmarakṣāstotra inscribed

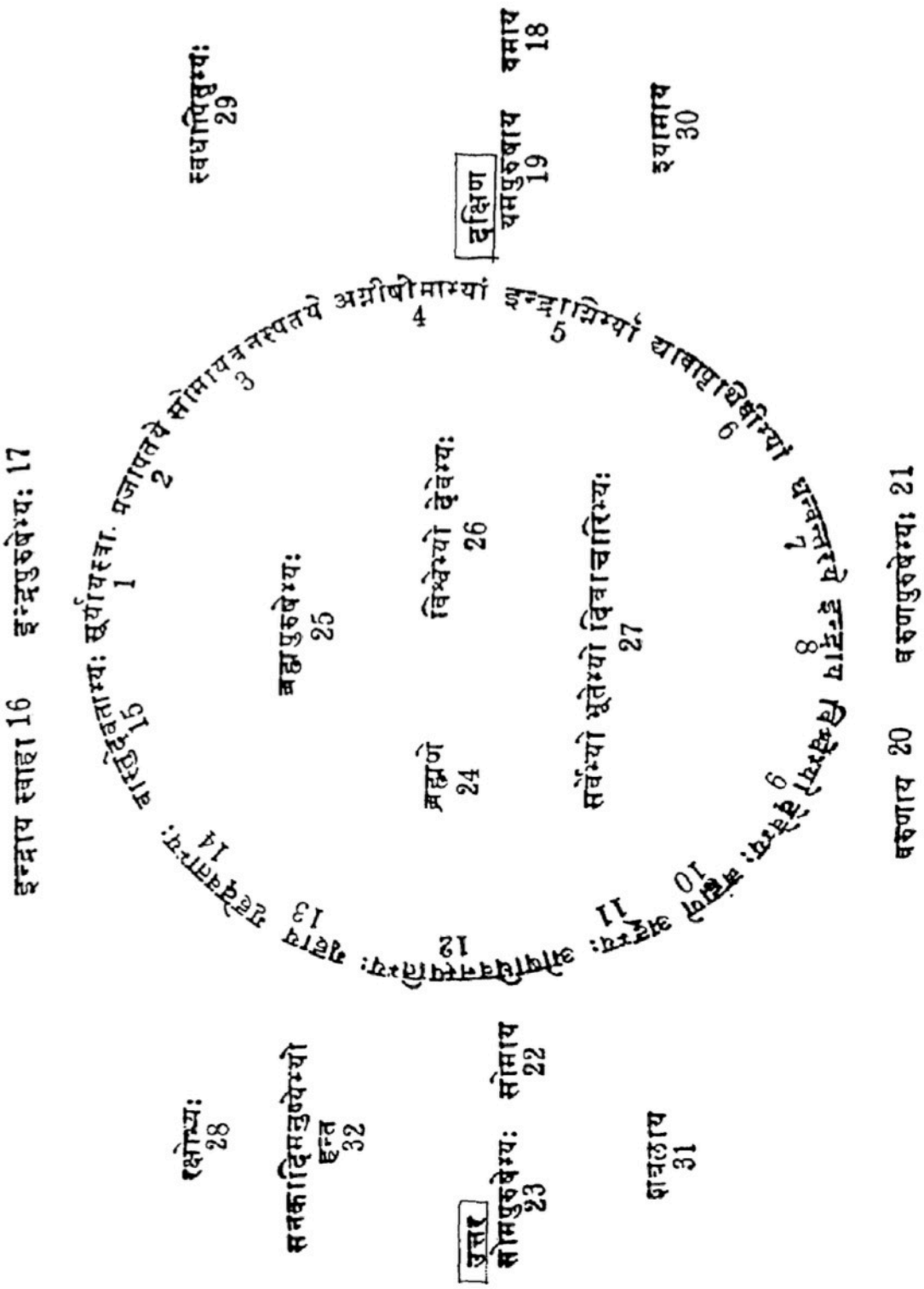
4. A yantra assigned to stanza 55 of the Saundaryalaharī



5. A yantra for subjugating one's master



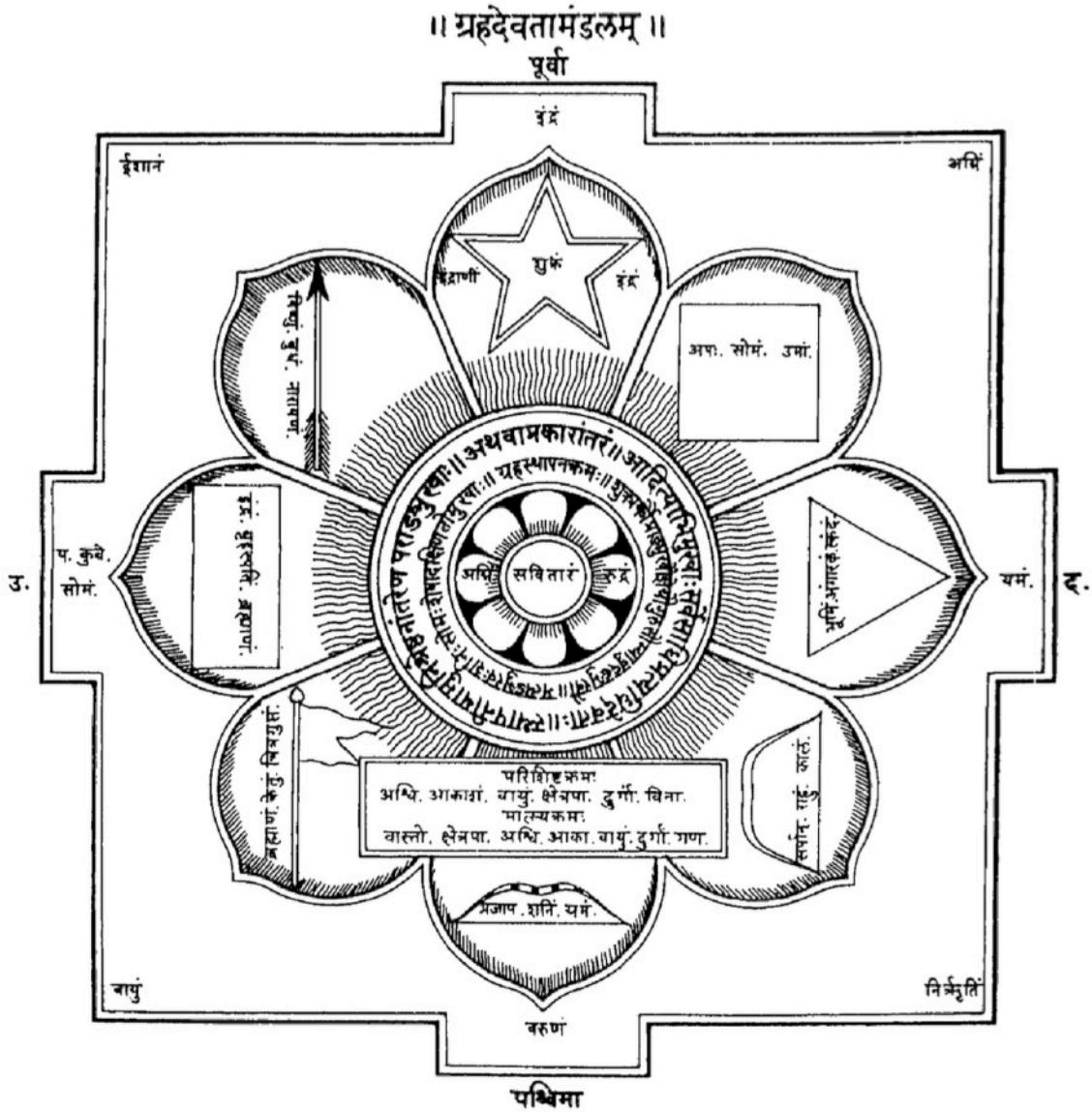
6. A *pūjāyantra* of Mahāgaṇapati



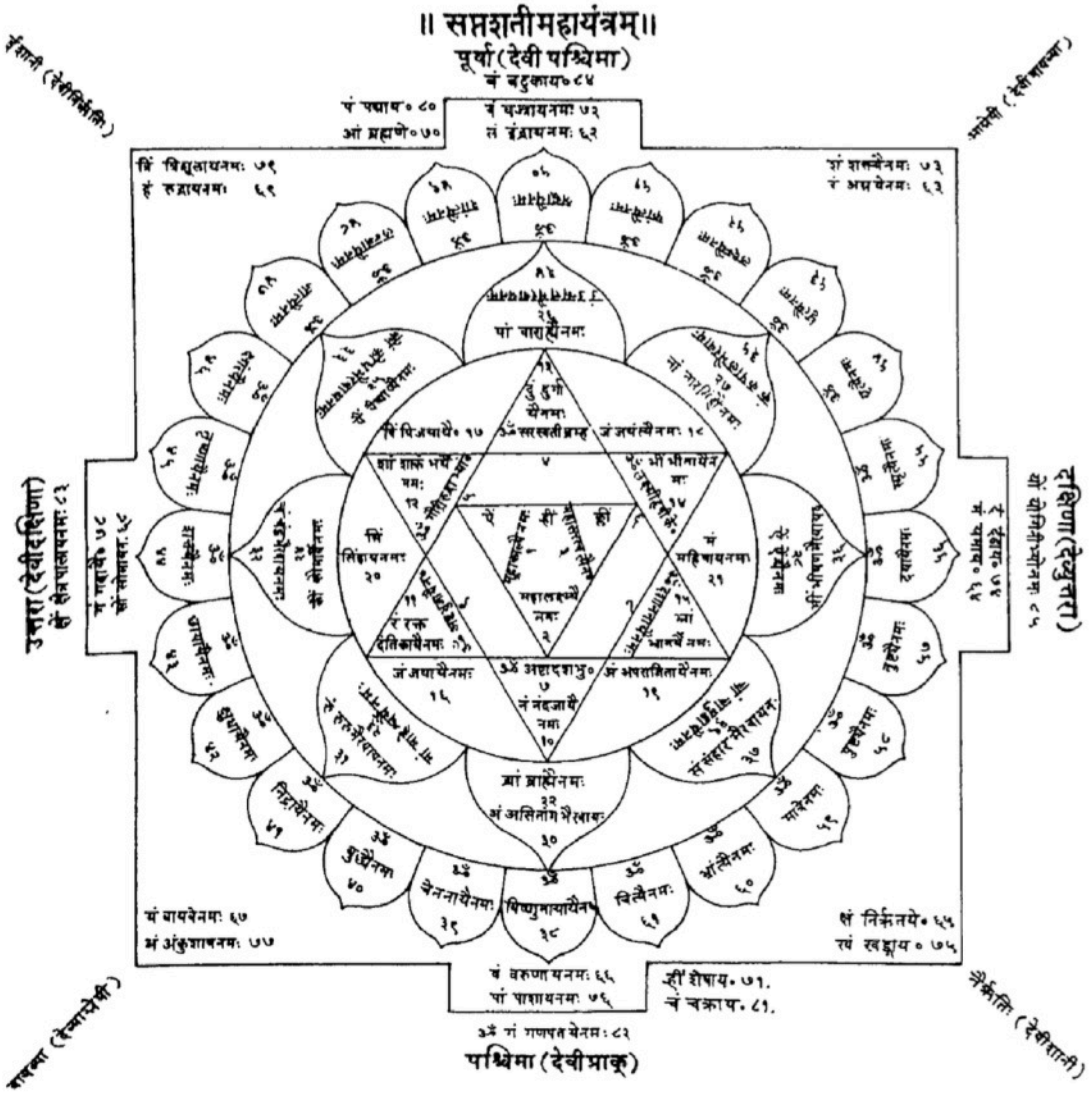
1. A diagram showing the deities of the *baliharaṇacakra*

NE EAST SE NORTH SOUTH NW WEST SW	ŚIVAPAÑCĀYATANA Viṣṇu (2) Sūrya (3) Śiva (1) Devī (5) Gaṇeśa (4)	VIṢṆUPAÑCĀYATANA Śiva (2) Gaṇeśa (3) Viṣṇu (1) Devī (5) Sūrya (4)
SŪRYAPAÑCĀYATANA Śiva (2) Gaṇeśa (3) Sūrya (1) Devī (5) Viṣṇu (4)	DEVĪPAÑCĀYATANA Viṣṇu (2) Śiva (3) Devī (1) Sūrya (5) Gaṇeśa (4)	GAṆEŚAPAÑCĀYATANA Viṣṇu (2) Śiva (3) Gaṇeśa (1) Devī (5) Sūrya (4)

2. The arrangement of the five deities in (domestic) *pañcāyatana* shrines

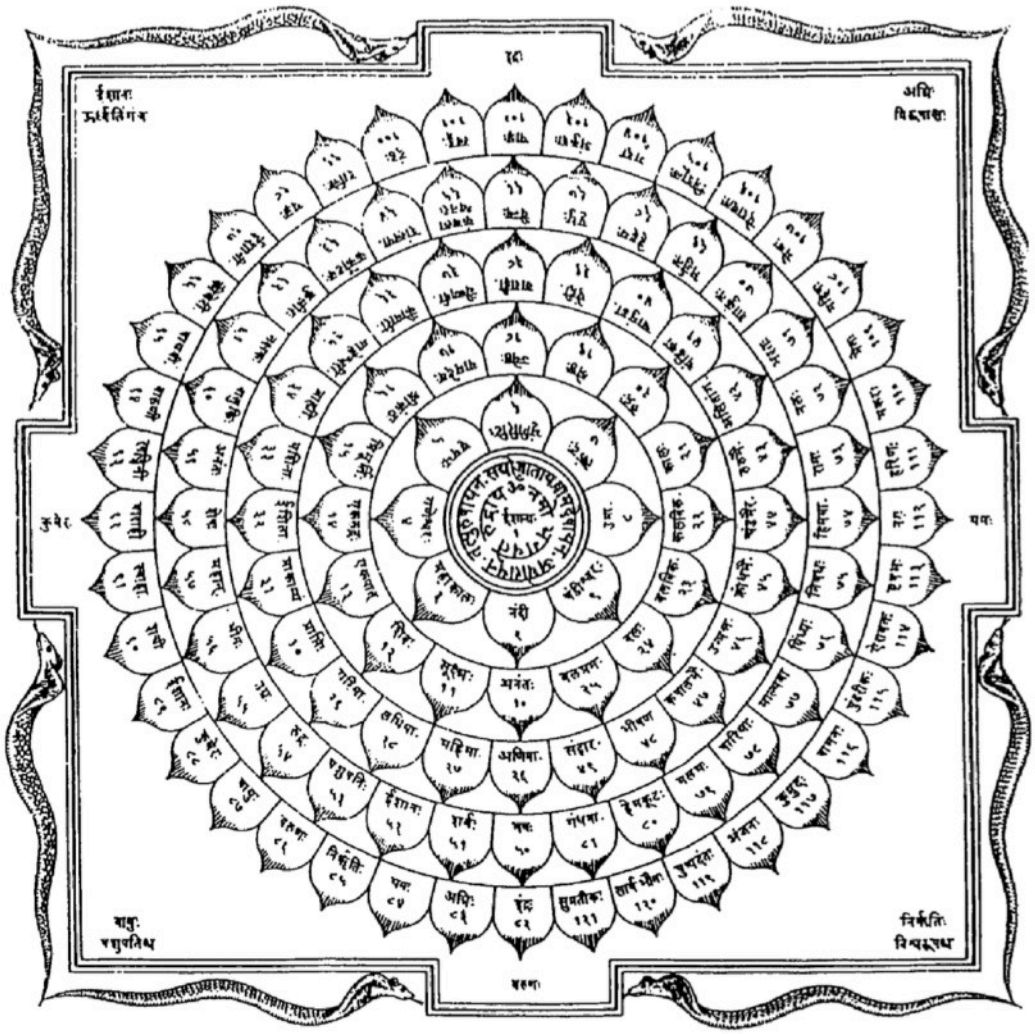


3. A maṇḍala of the heavenly bodies



4. The *(durgā)saptaśatīmahāyantra*

॥ रुद्रपीठमहायंत्रम् ॥



5. The *rudrapīṭhamahāyantra*

Figure 1. Basic square unit (*pada*, *koṣṭha*)

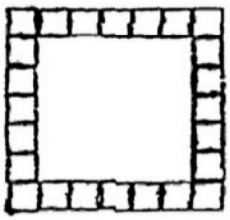


Figure 2. 'Enclosure' (*paridhi*)

Figure 3. 'Well' (*vāpī*)

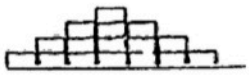


Figure 4. 'Offset' (*bhadra*)

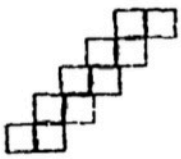


Figure 5. 'Creeper' (*vallī*)

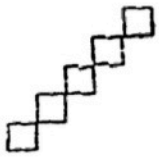


Figure 6. 'Chain' (*śṛṅkhalā*)

Figure 7. 'Crescent moon' (*khaṇḍendu*)

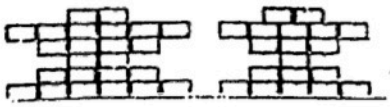
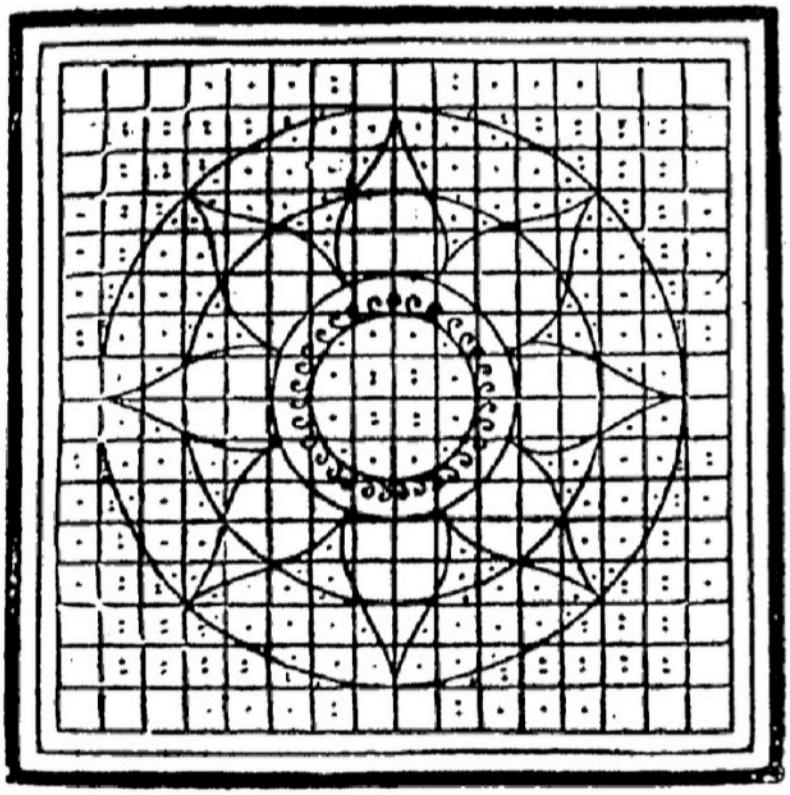


Figure 8. Phallic symbol (*liṅga*) of Śiva

Figure 9. Rāmamudrā *rājā rāma*

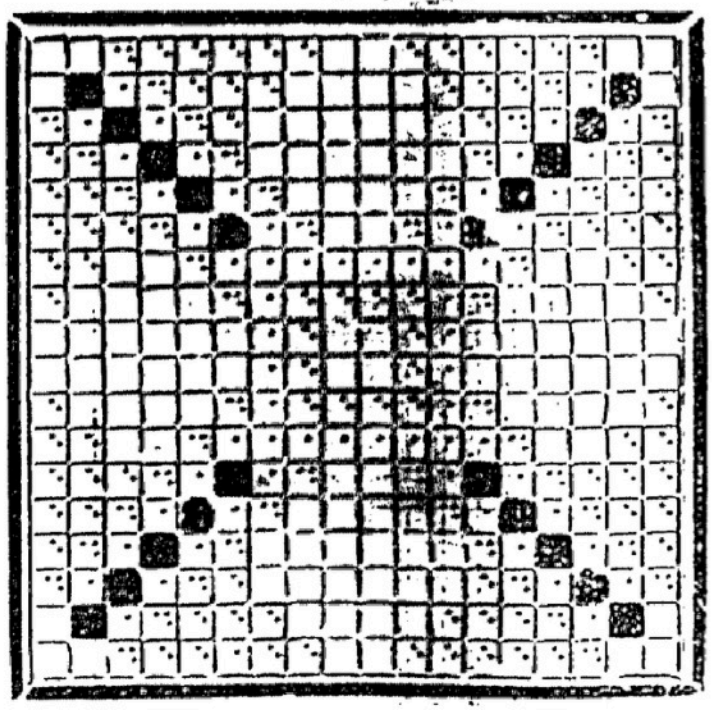
Table: Constituent Parts of the Bhadras

अथ सप्तदशरेखात्मकं सर्वतोभद्रमंडलम् १

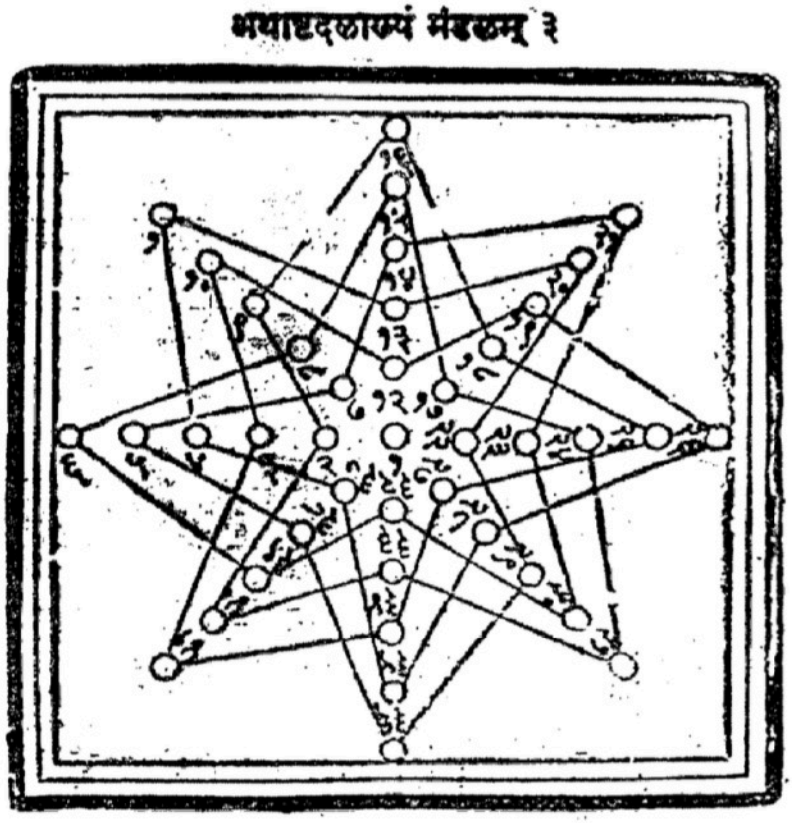


1. Sarvatobhadra, type 1

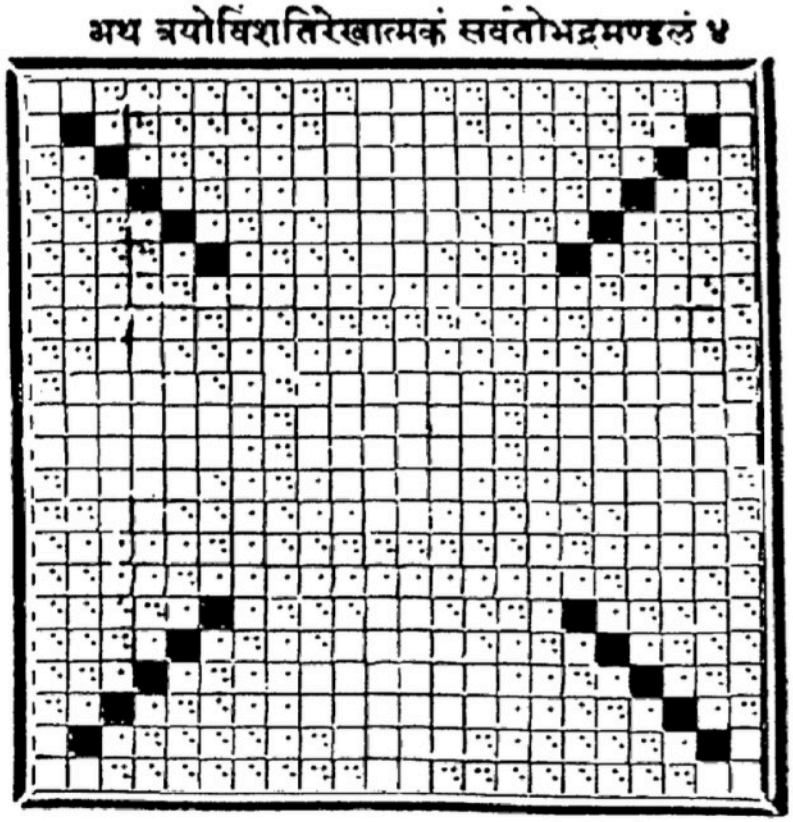
अथ एकोनविंशतिरेखात्मकं
सर्वतोभद्रमंडलम् २



2. Sarvatobhadra, type 2

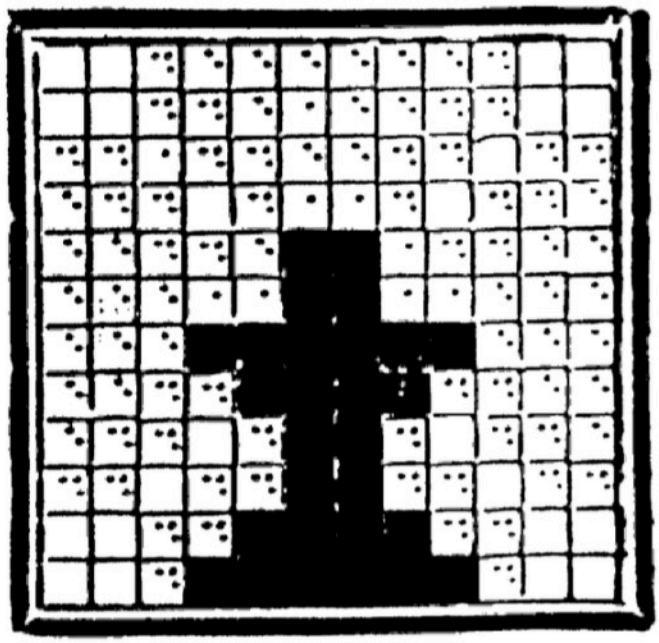


3. Sarvatobhadra, type 3



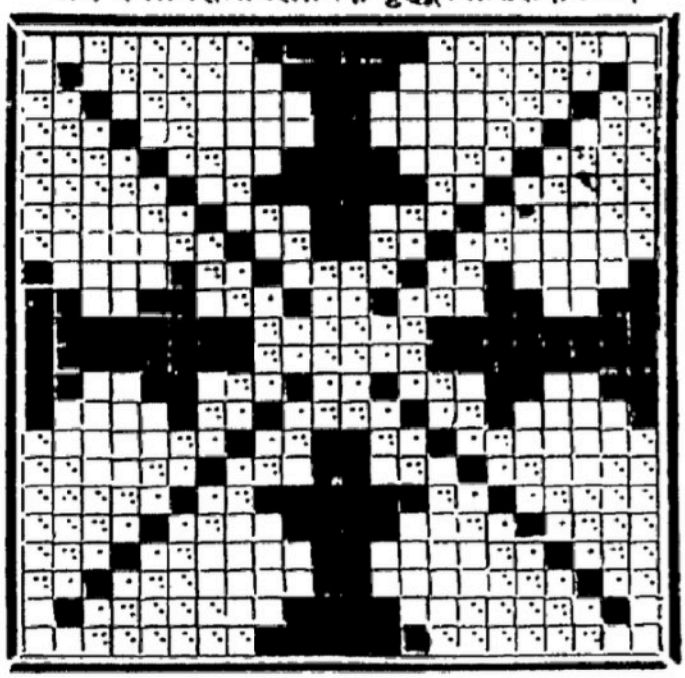
4. Sarvatobhadra, type 4

अथ त्रयोदशरेखात्मकं लघु-
गौरीतिलकाख्यमेकलिंग-
तोभद्रमण्डलंपञ्चमं ५



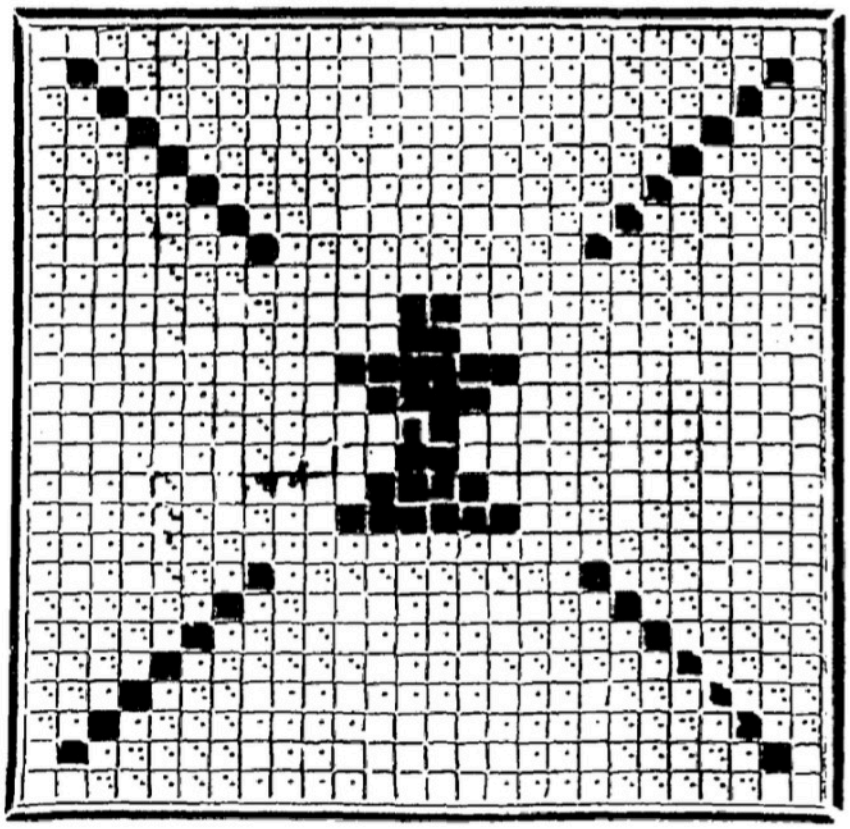
5. Ekaliṅgatobhadra *laghugaurītilaka*

अथ त्रयोविंशतिरेखात्मकं बृहद्गौरीतिलकमं० ६



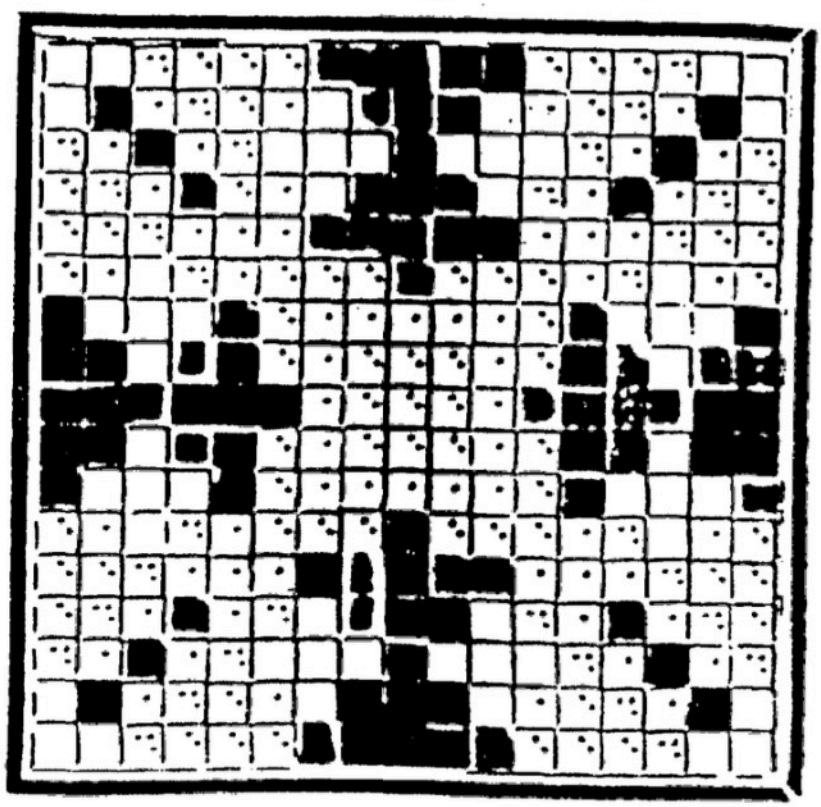
6. Caturliṅgatobhadra *bṛhadgaurītilaka*

अथ सप्तविंशतिरेखात्मकगौरीतिलकमंडलम् ७



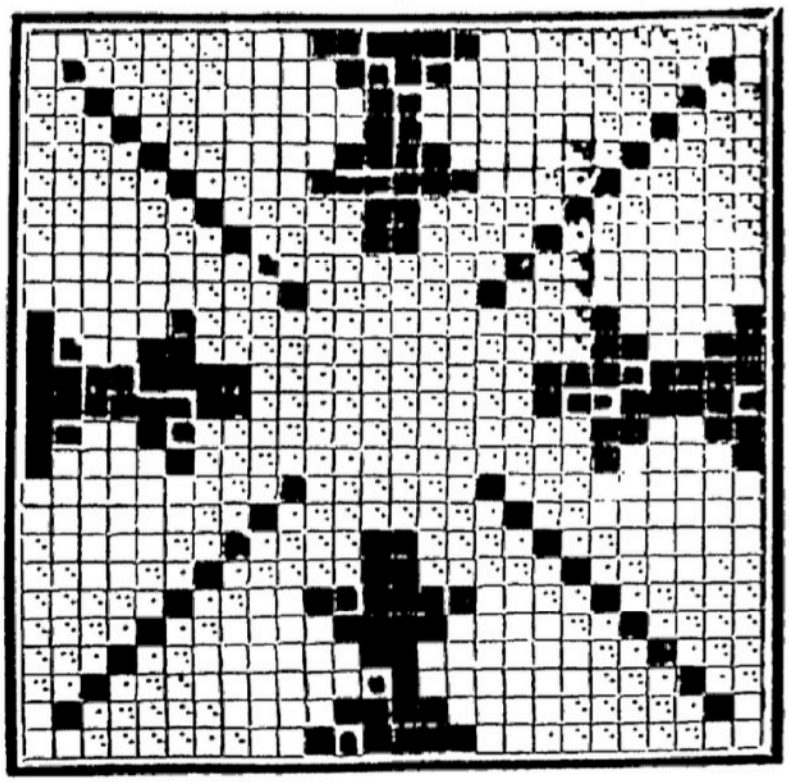
7. Gaurītilaka

अष्टादशरेखात्मकंचतुर्लिंगतोभद्रमं० ८



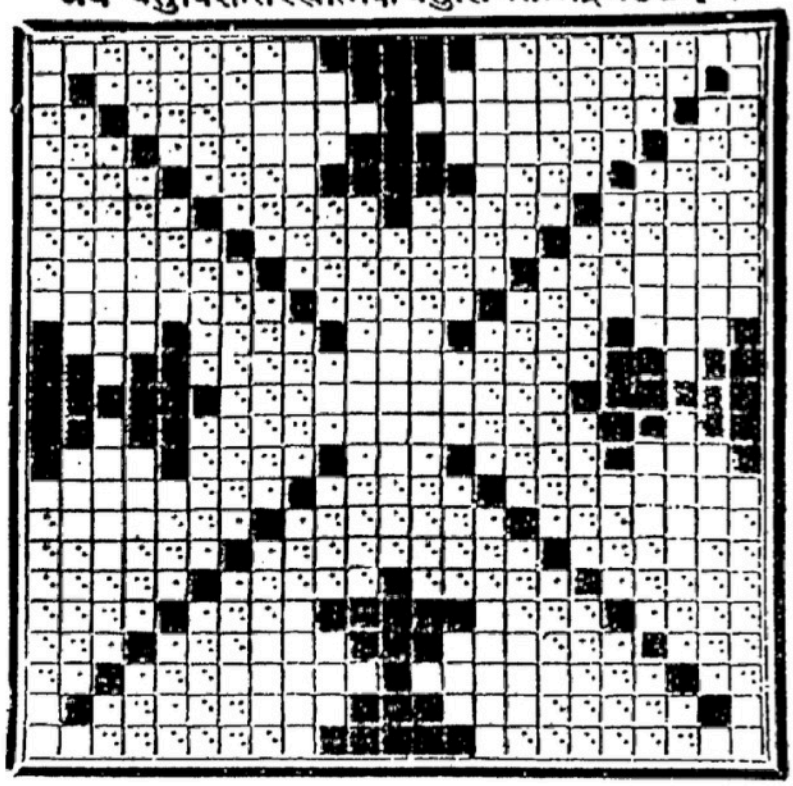
8. Caturliṅgatobhadra, type 1

सप्तविंशतिरेखात्मकंचतुर्लिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ९

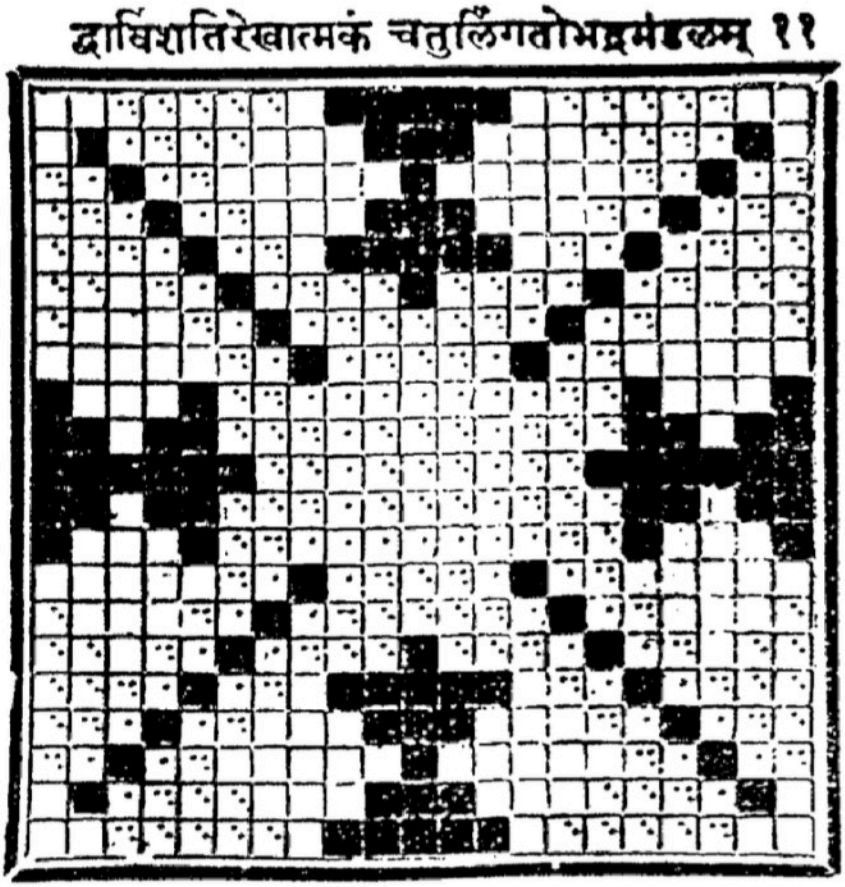


9. Caturliṅgatobhadra, type 2

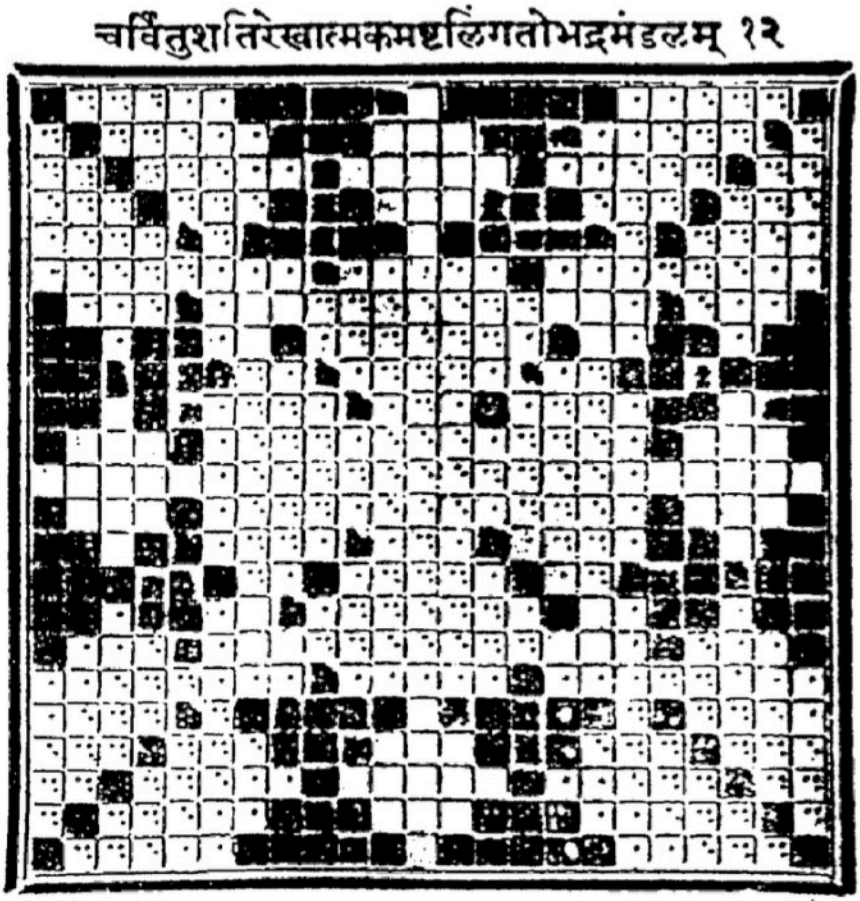
अथ चतुर्विंशतिरेखात्मकंचतुर्लिंगतोभद्रमंडलम १०



10. Caturliṅgatobhadra, type 3

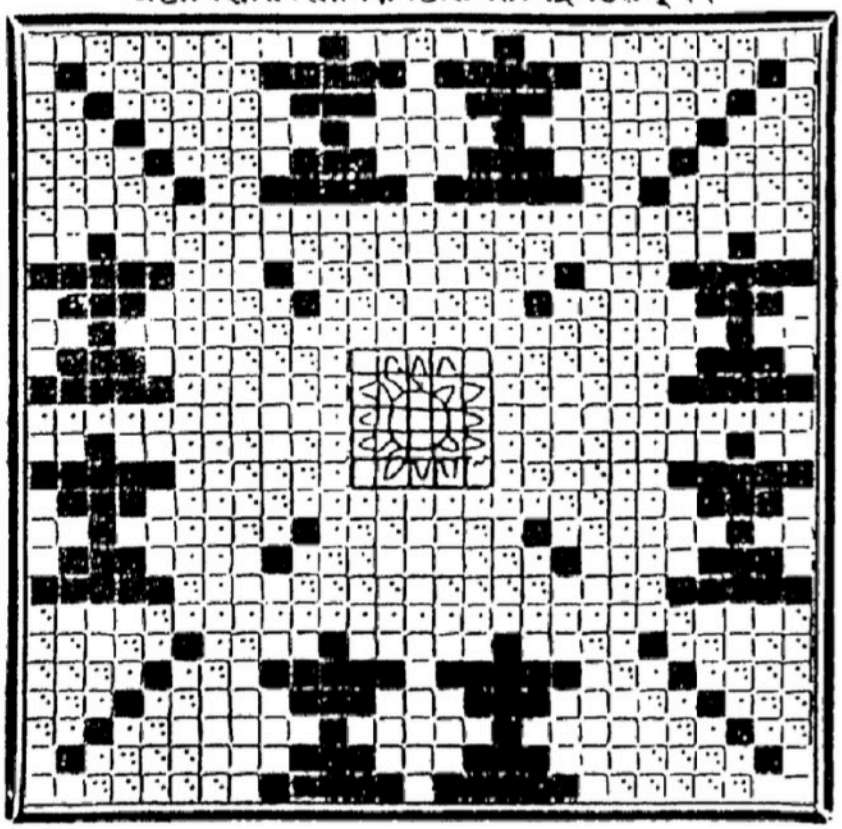


11. Caturliṅgatobhadra, type 4



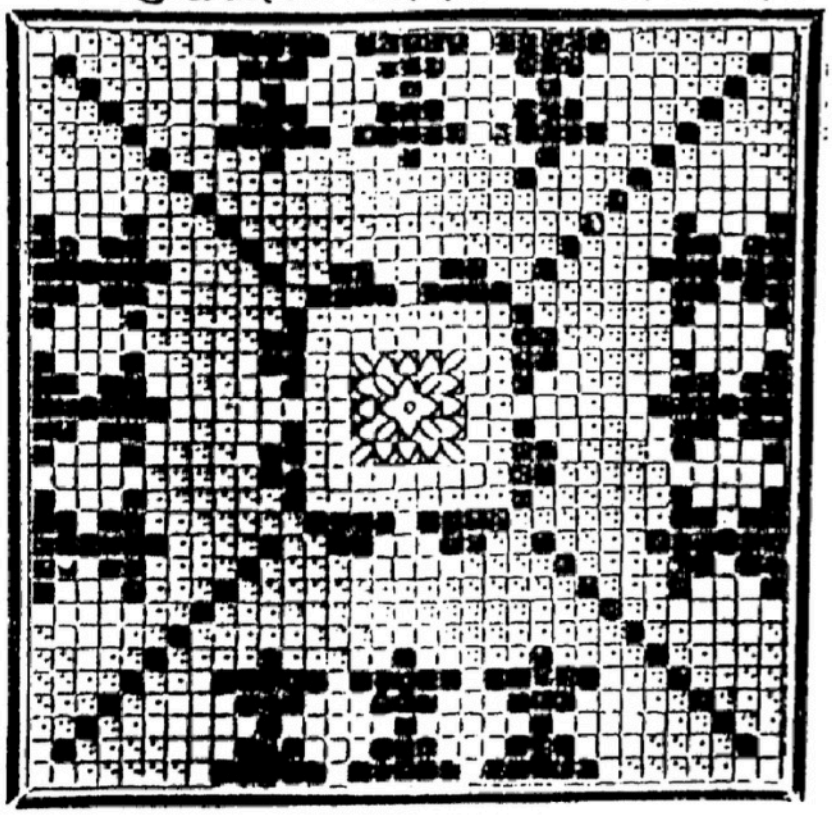
12. Aṣṭaliṅgatobhadra, type 1

अष्टाविंशतिरेखात्मकमष्टलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् १३



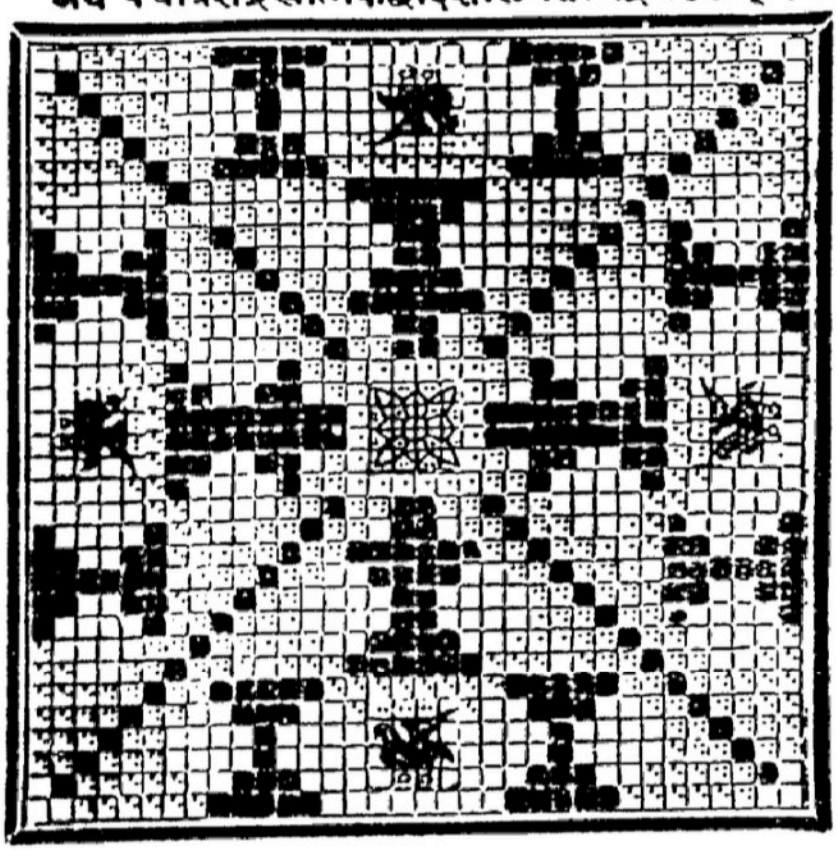
13. Aṣṭaliṅgatobhadra, type 2

अथ चतुस्त्रिंशद्रेखात्मकंद्वादशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् १४



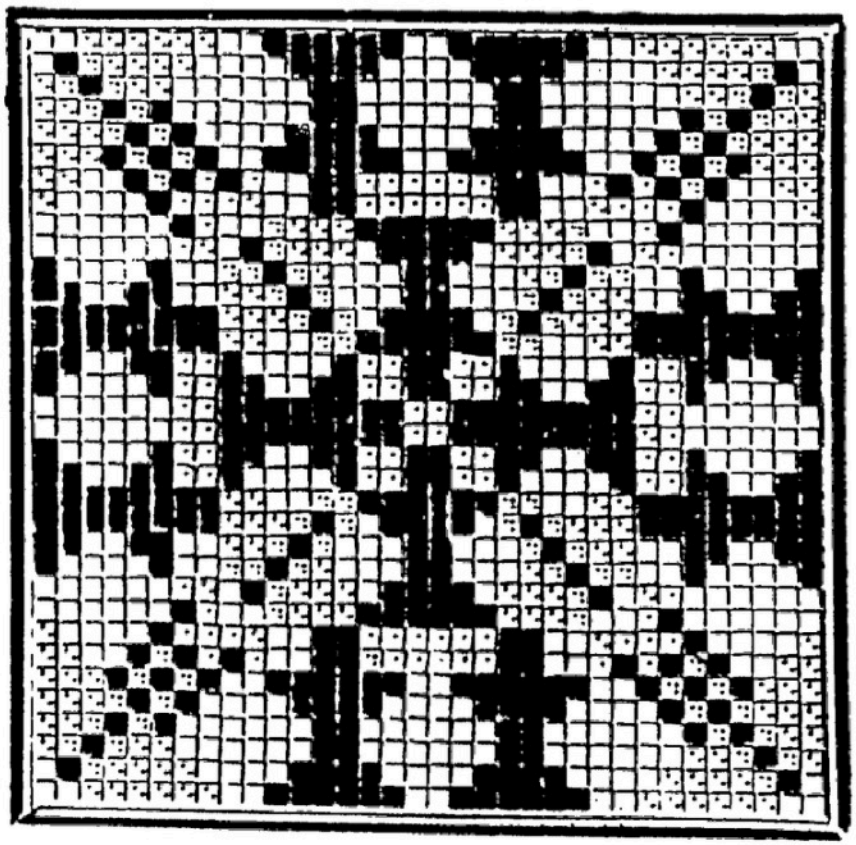
14. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 1

अथ पंचत्रिंशद्रेखात्मकंद्वादशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् १५



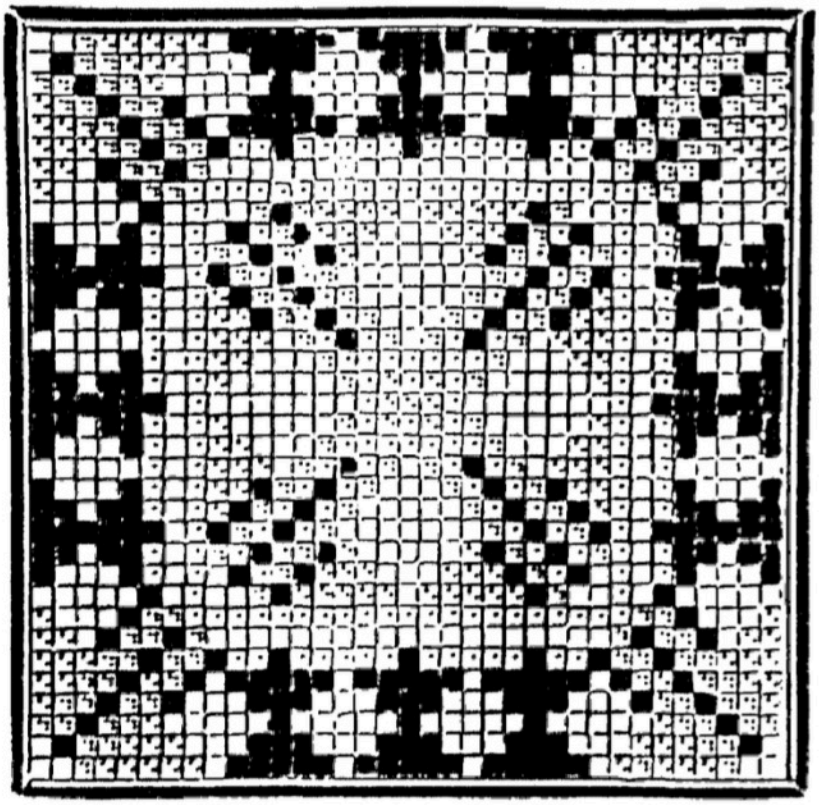
15. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 2

पंचत्रिंशद्रेखात्मकं द्वादशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलं १६



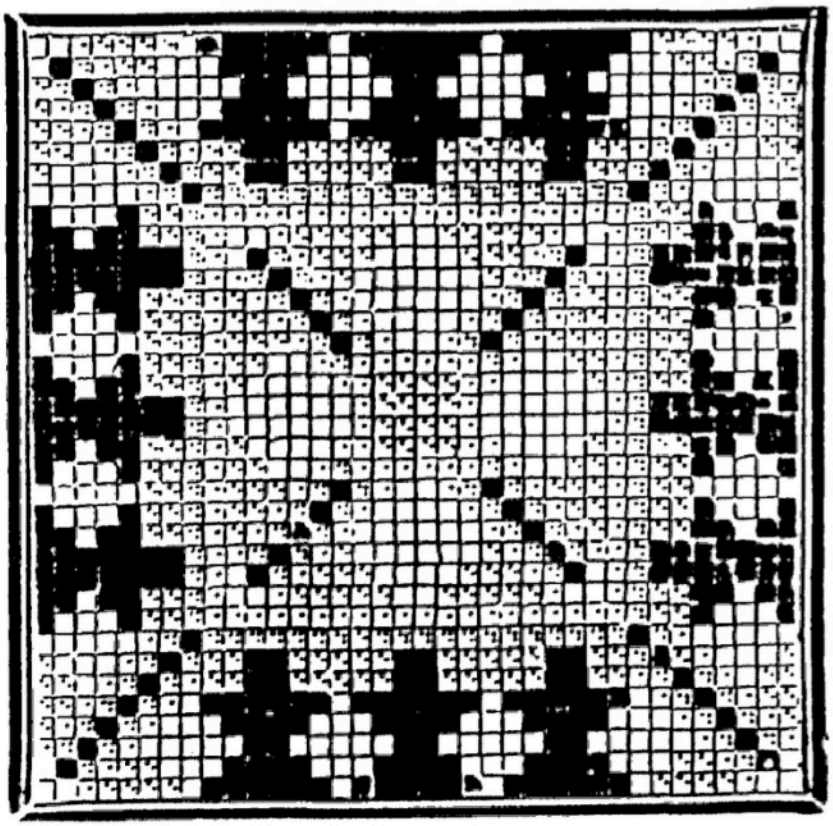
16. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 3

षट्त्रिंशद्रेखायुतंहरिहरात्मकंद्वादशलिंगतोभद्रमं. १७



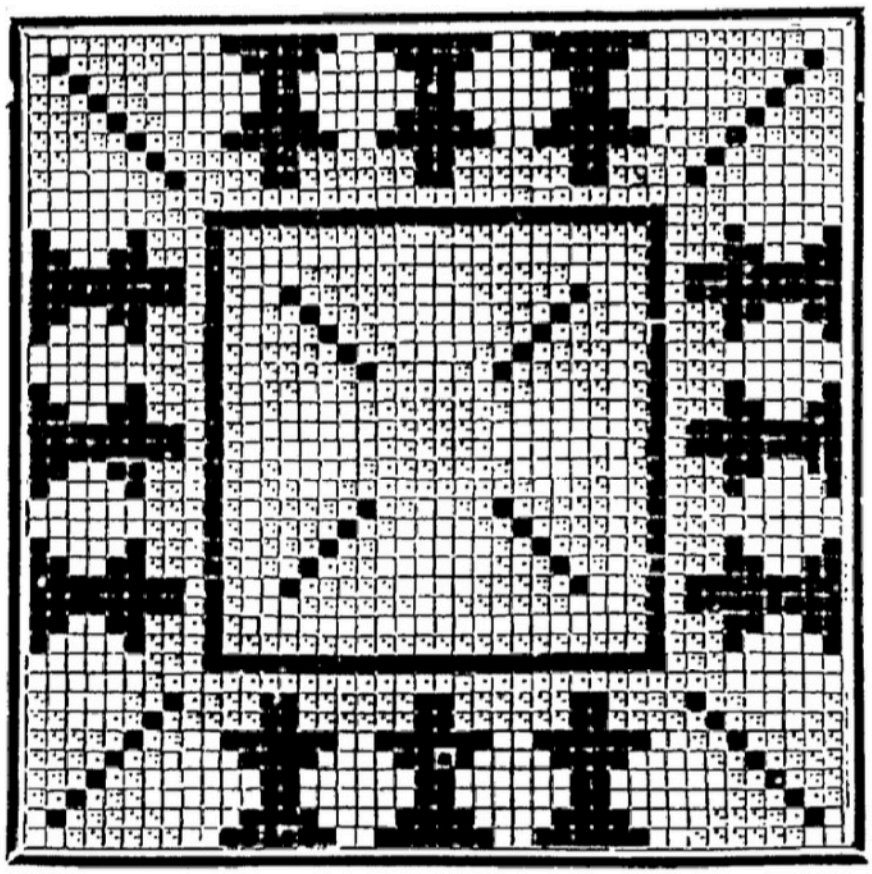
17. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 4

अथ सप्तत्रिंशद्रेखात्मकं द्वादशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् १८



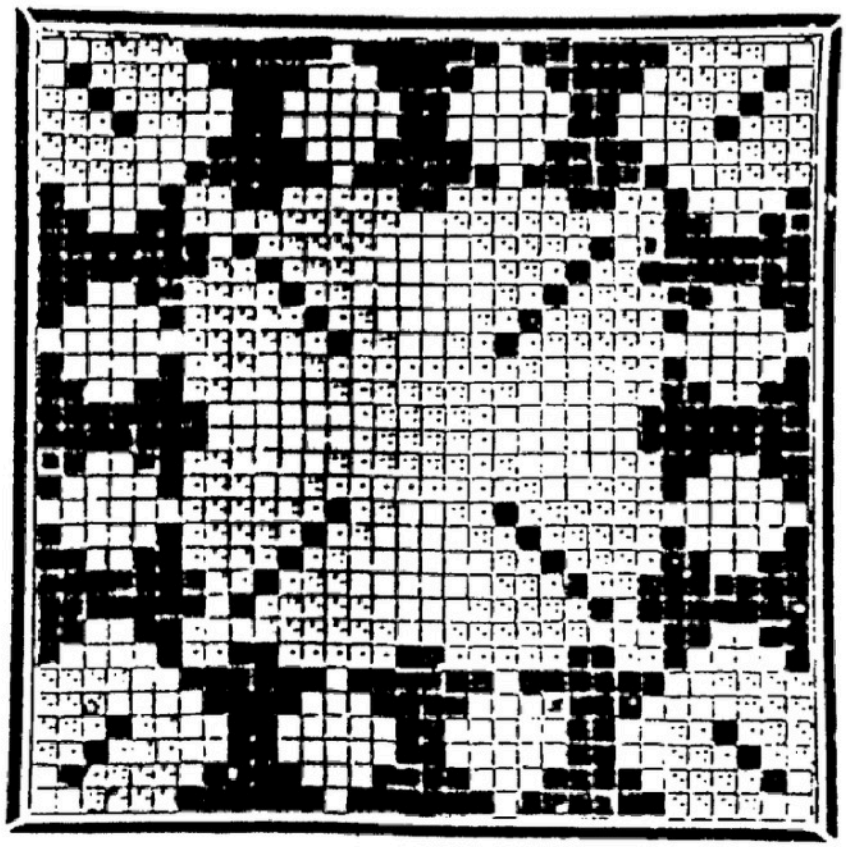
18. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 5

अथ ४३ रेखात्मकं हरिहरात्मकं द्वादशलिंगतोभद्रमं० १९



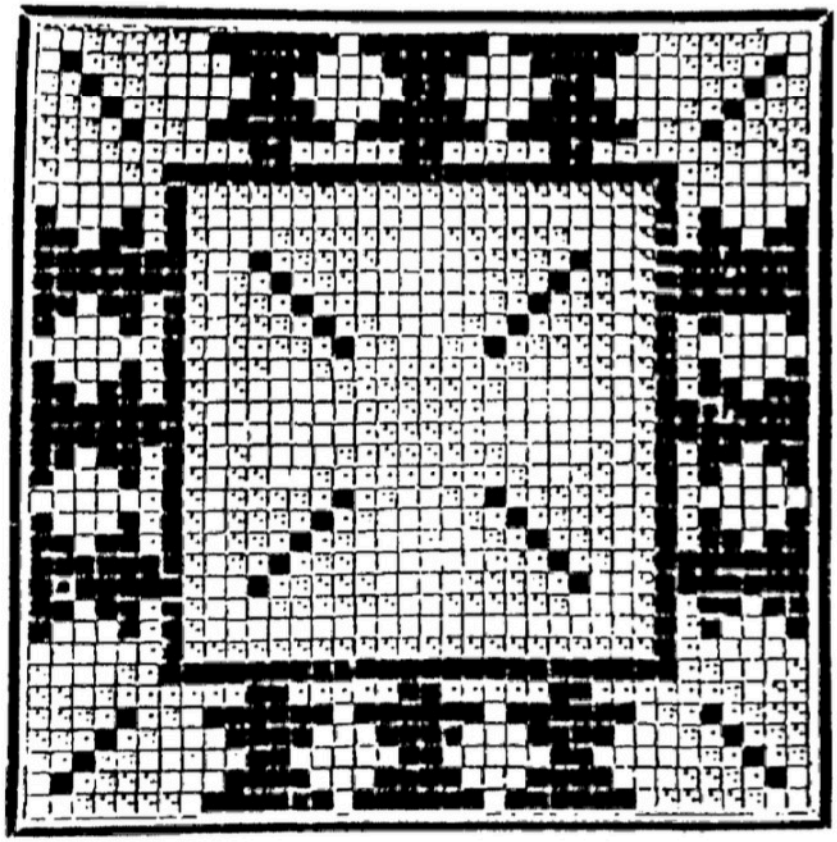
19. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 6

३३ रेखात्मकं हरिहरात्मकं १२ लिंगतोभद्रमं० २०



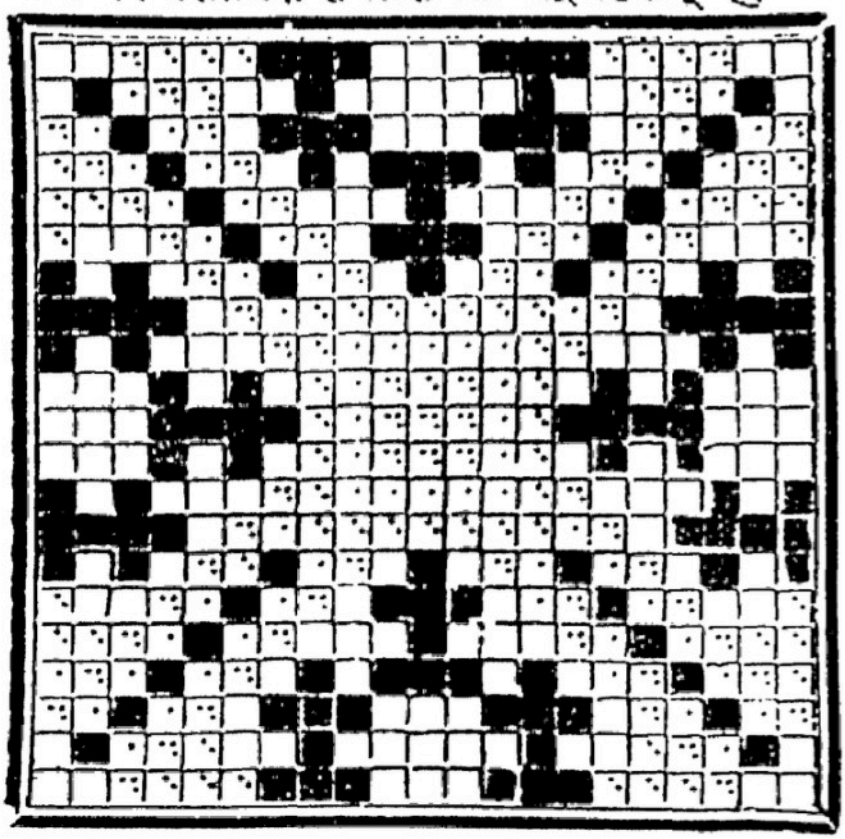
20. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 7

अथ २७ रेखात्मकं हरिहरात्मकं १२ लिंगतोभद्रमं० २१



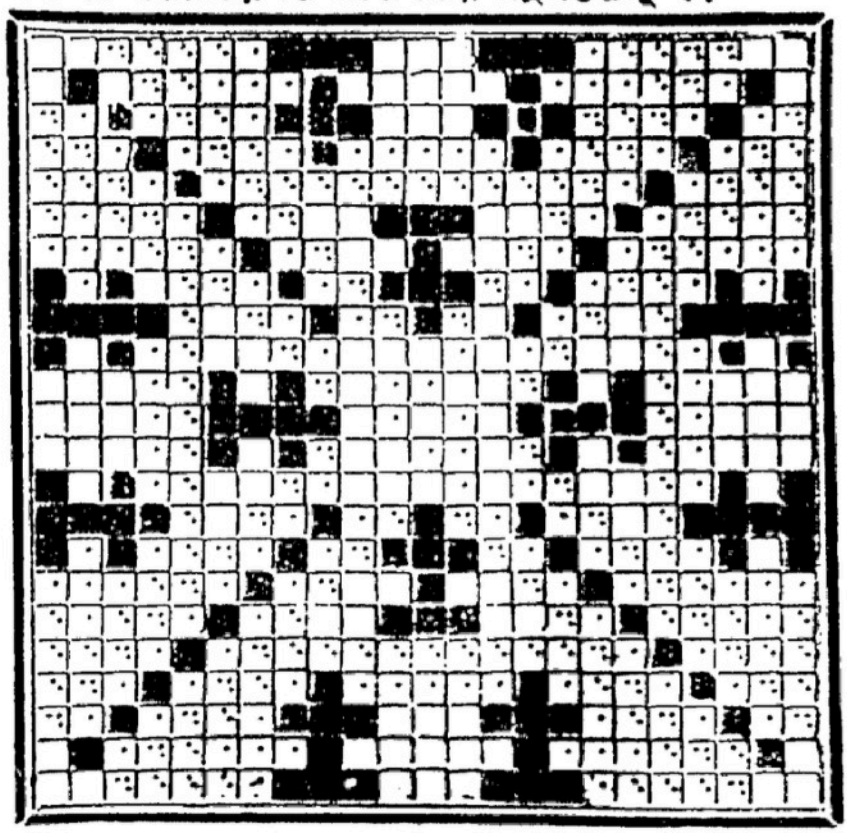
21. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 8

अथ २२ रेखात्मकं लनालिंगतो भद्रमंडलम् २२



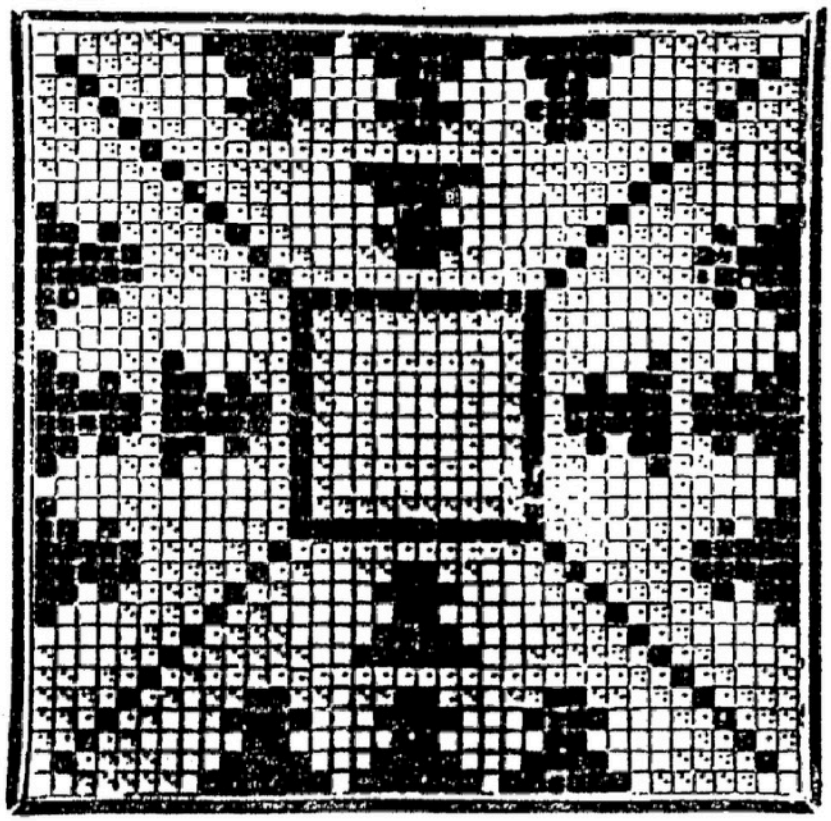
22. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 9

अथ २४ रेखात्मकं लिंगस्वस्तिकं भद्रमंडलम् २३



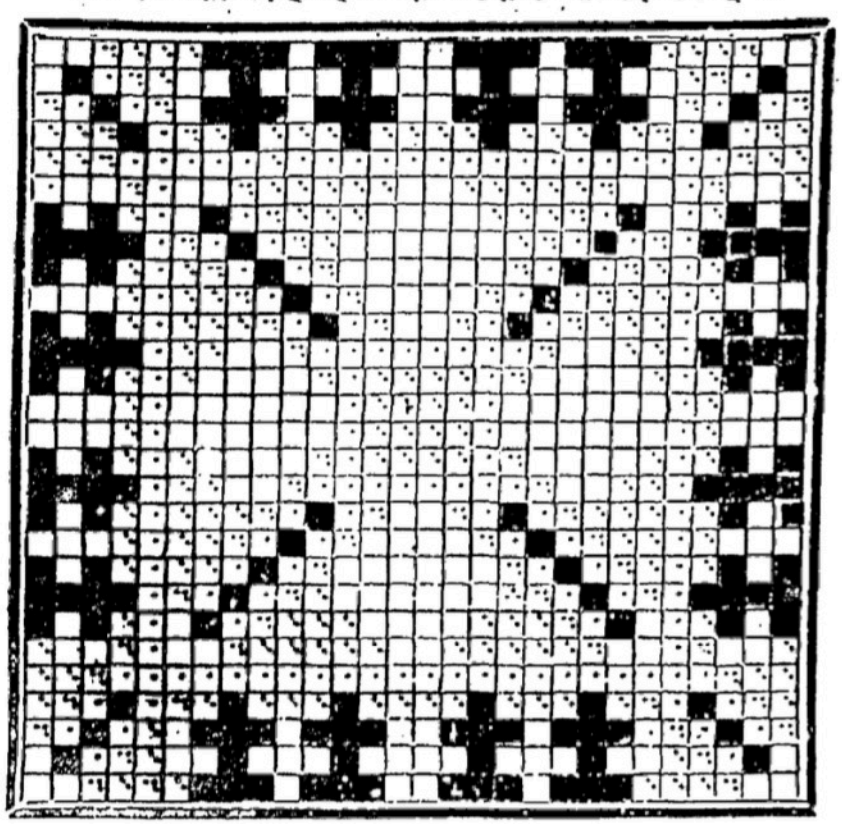
23. Dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 10

अथ २७ रेखात्मकं षोडशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् २६



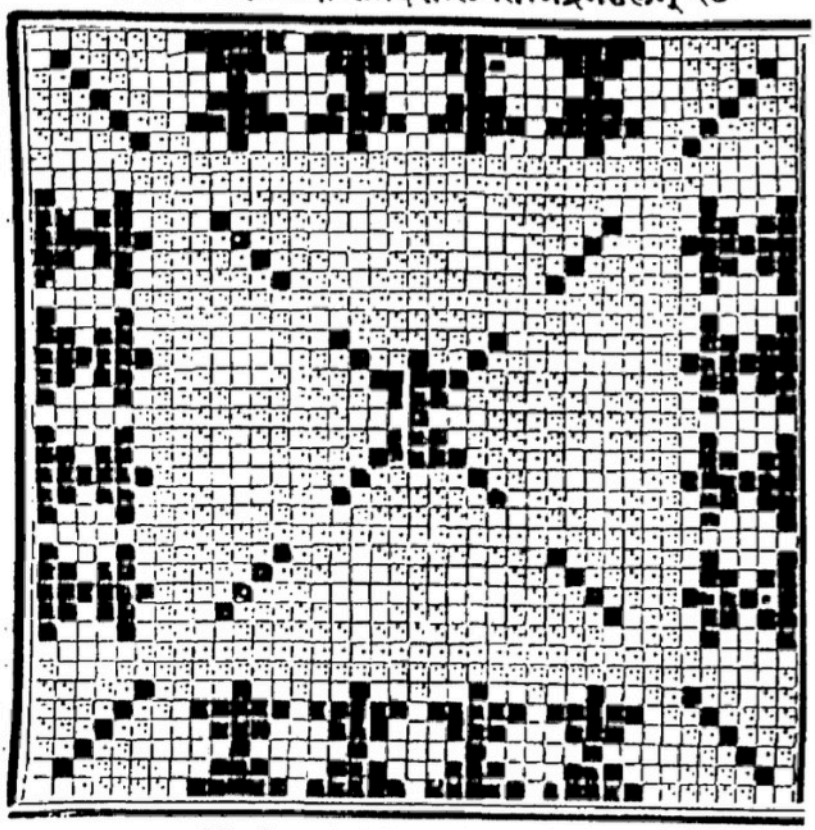
26. Ṣoḍaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 1

अथ २९ रेखात्मकंहद्विरात्मकं षोडशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् २७

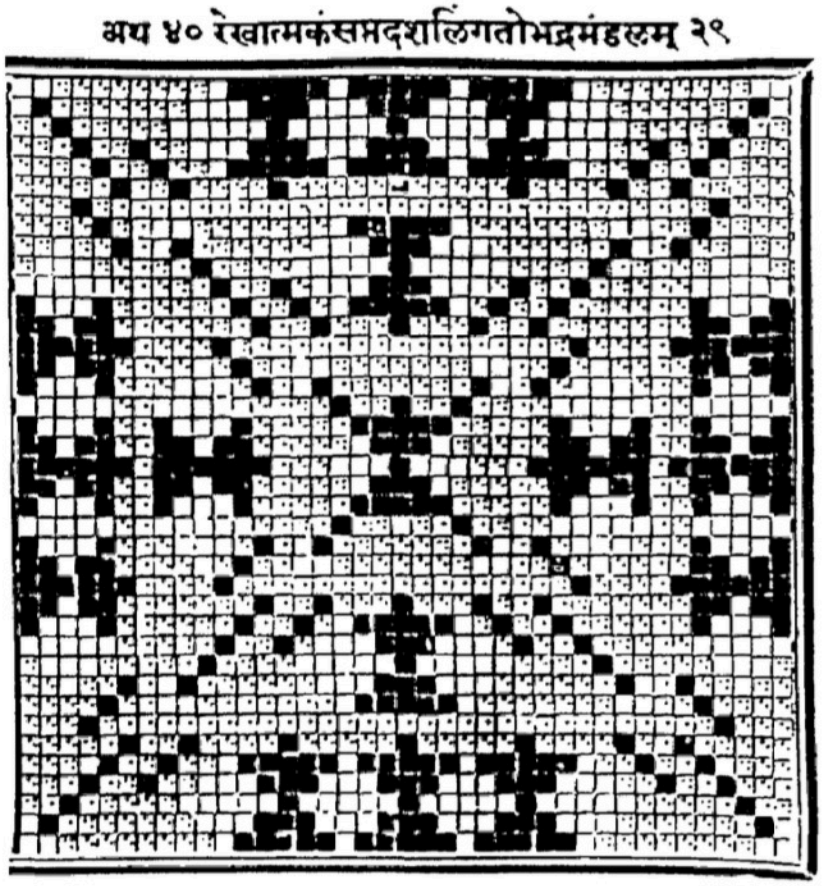


27. Ṣoḍaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 2

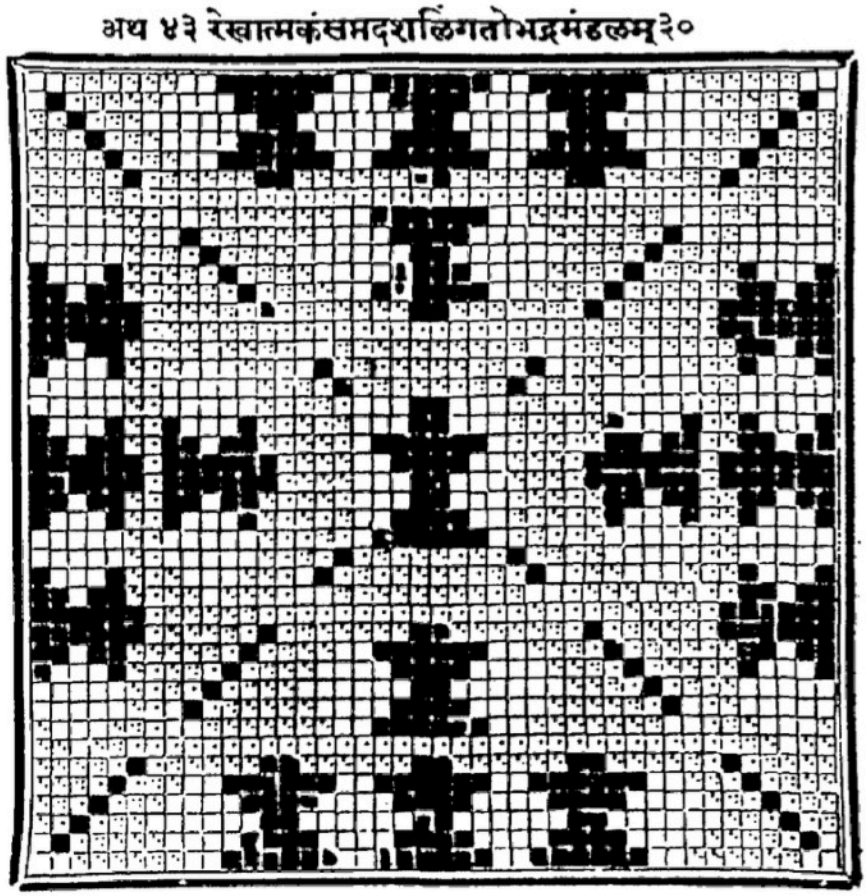
अथ ४० रेखात्मकं सप्तदशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् २८



28. Saptadaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 1

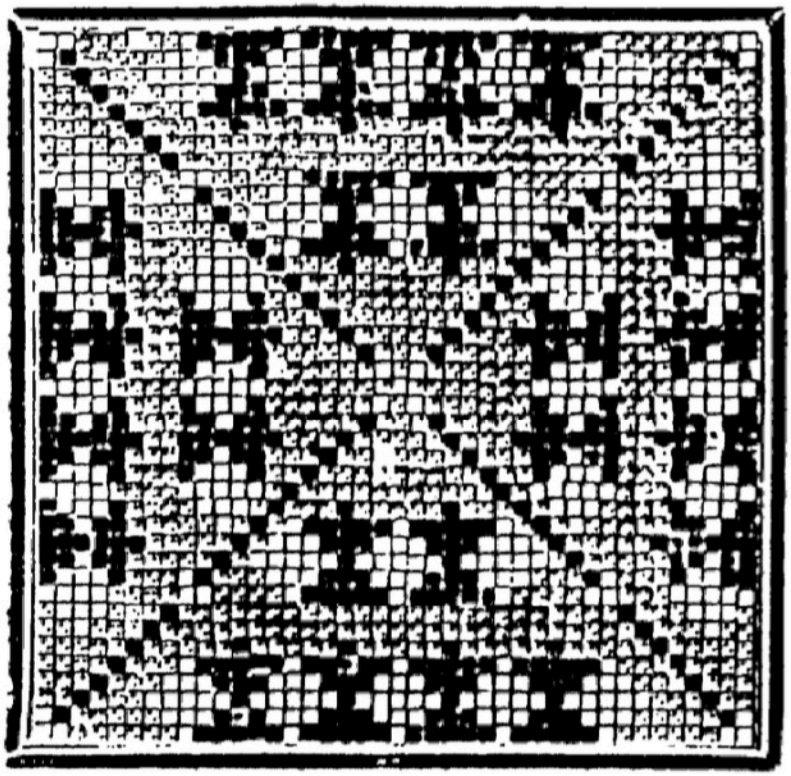


29. Saptadaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 2



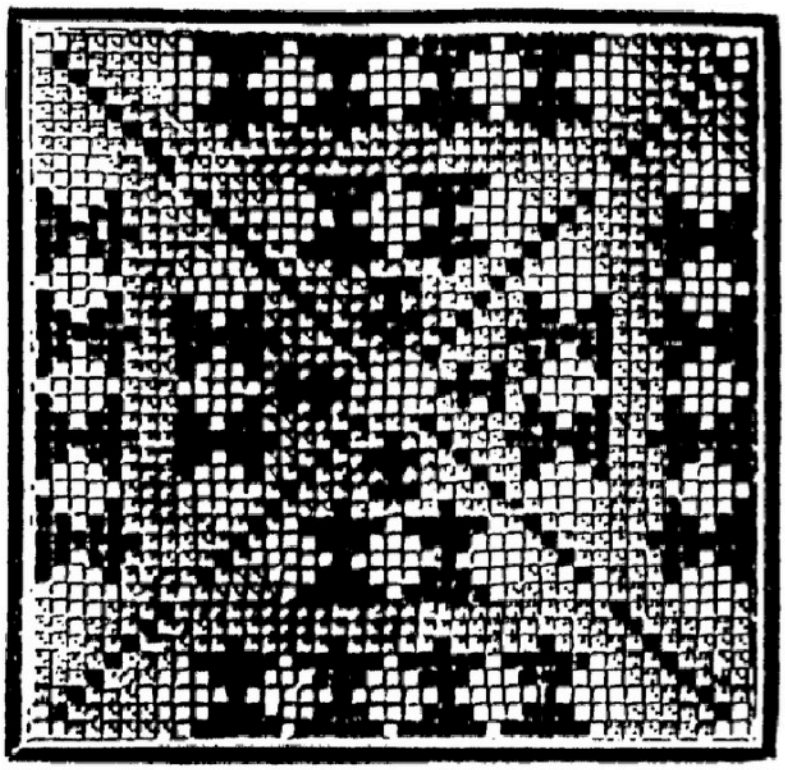
30. Saptadaśaliṅgatobhadra, type 3

अथ ४२ रेखात्मकं चतुर्विंशतिर्लिंगतोभद्रमंडलं ३१



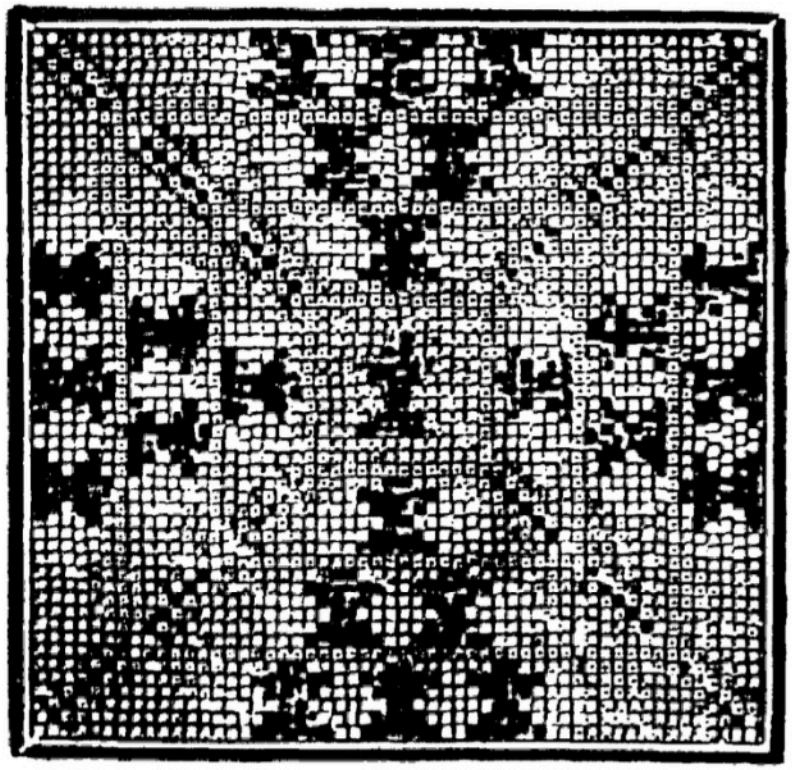
31. Caturviṃśatiliṅgatobhadra

अथ ४२ रेखात्मकमष्टाविंशतिर्लिंगतोभद्रमं० ३२



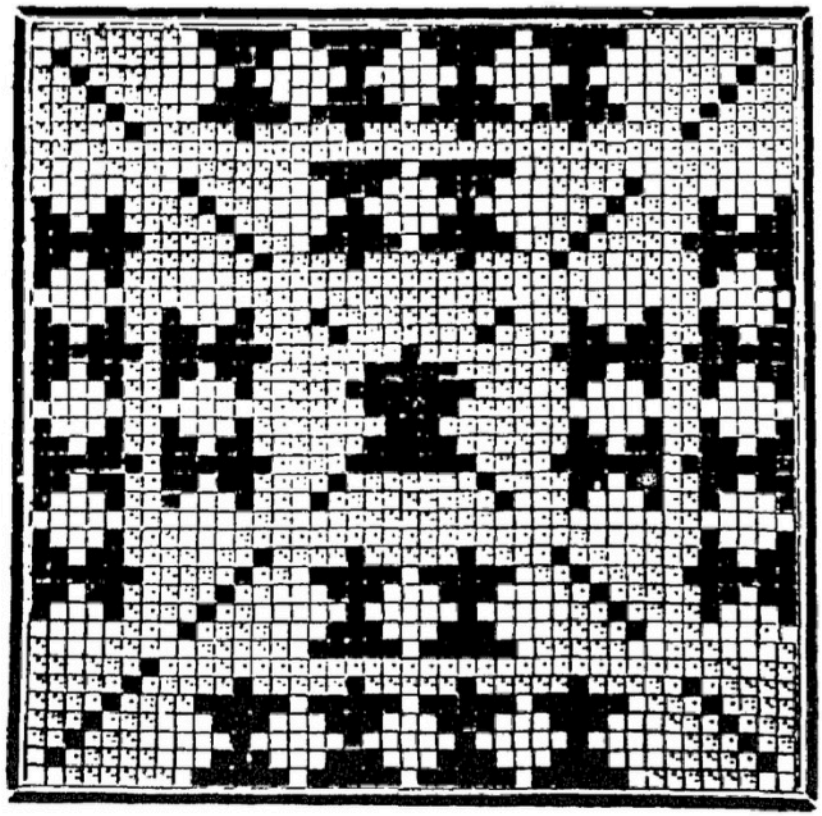
32. Aṣṭāviṃśatiliṅgatobhadra

अथ ५५ रेखात्मकं पंचविंशतिलिंगतोभद्रमंडलं ३३



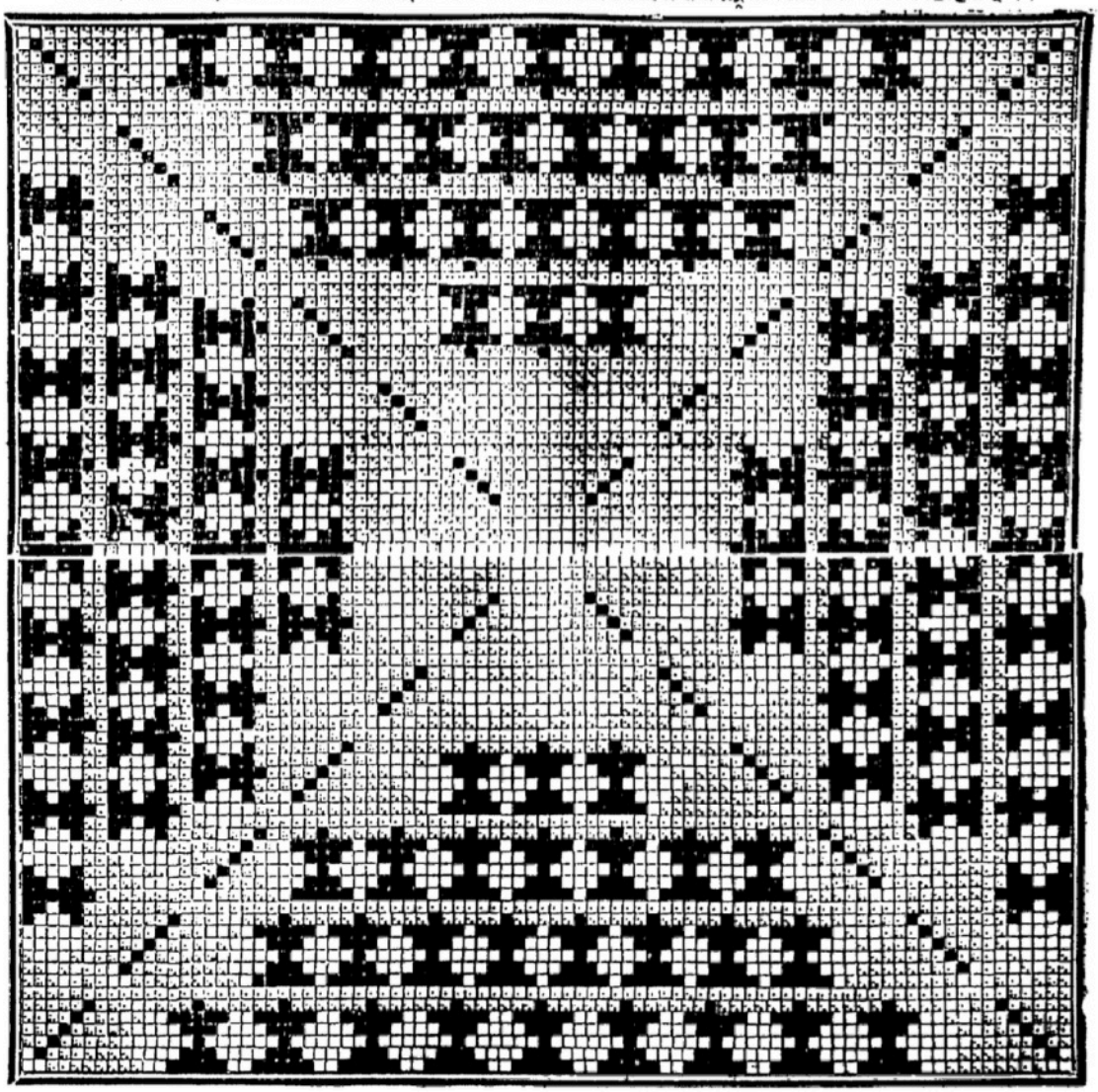
33. Pañcaviṃśatiliṅgatobhadra, type 1

अथ ४२ रेखात्मकं पंचविंशतिलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ३४.

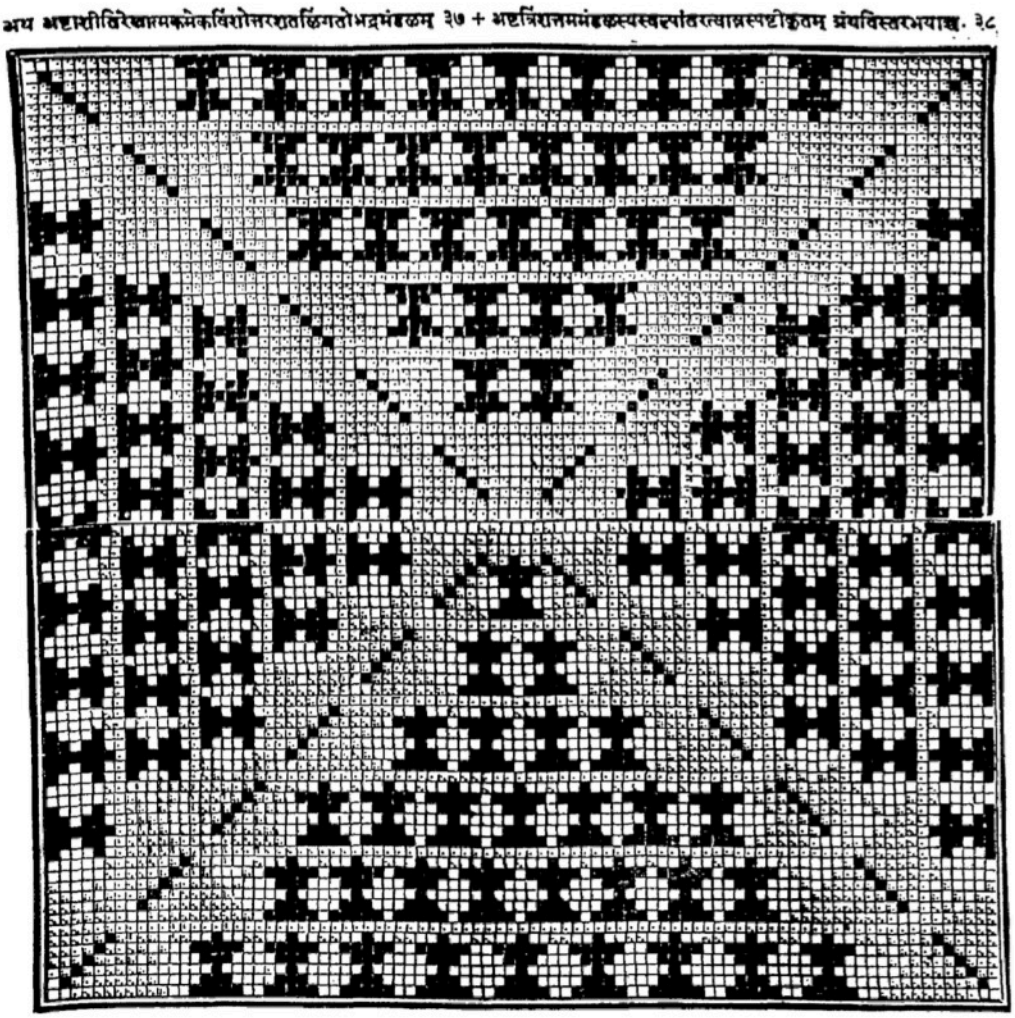


34. Pañcaviṃśatiliṅgatobhadra, type 2

अथ ८६ रेखात्मकम् अष्टोत्तरशतलिंगतोभद्रमं० ३५ अग्रे प्रकारांतरस्य स्वल्पान्तरत्वाद्ग्रंथविस्तरभयाच्च न स्पष्टीकृतम् ३६

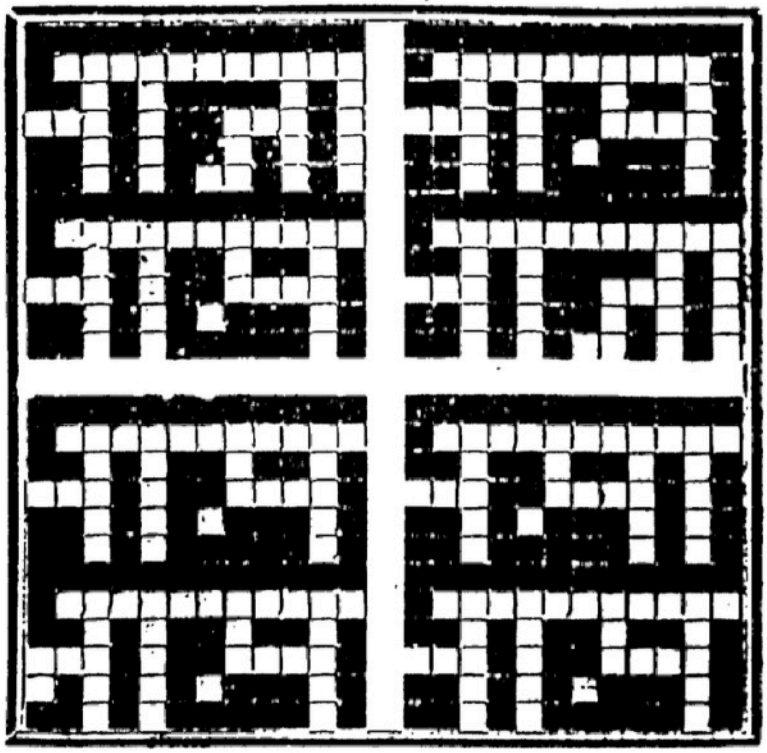


35. Aṣṭottaraśataliṅgatobhadra, type 2



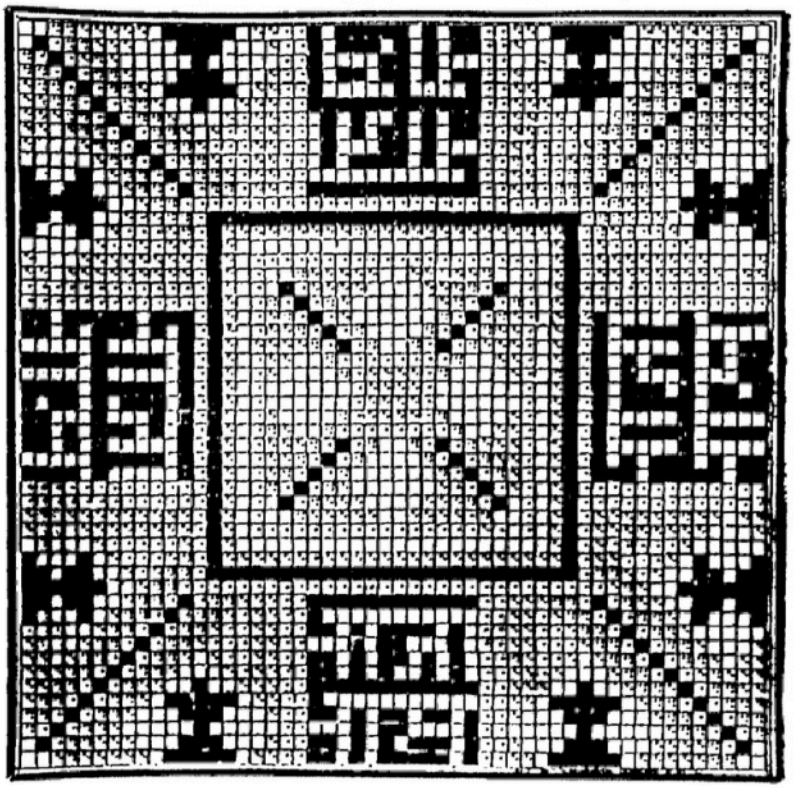
37. Ekaviṃśottaraśataliṅgatobhadra, type I

अथ २६ रेखात्मकमेकमुद्रारामतोभद्रमंडलम् ४१



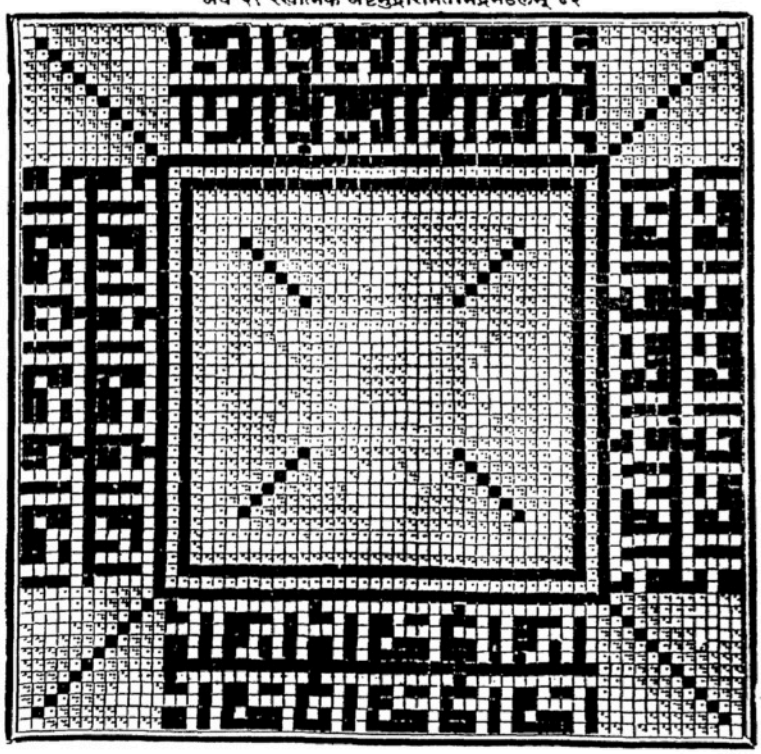
41. Ekamudrārāmatobhadra

अथ ५३ रेखात्मकं चतुर्मुद्रारामलिंगतोभद्रमण्डलम् ४२



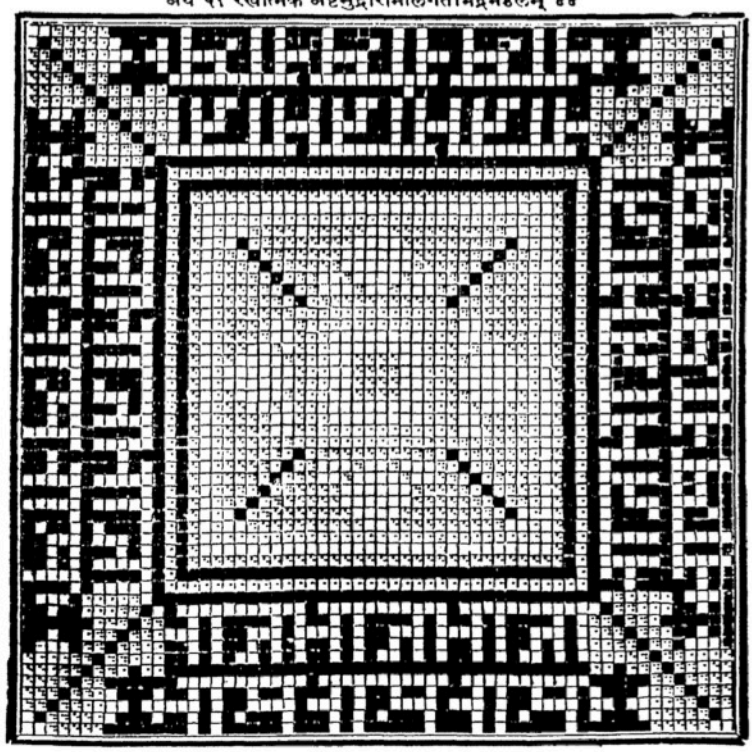
42. Caturmudrārāmaliṅgatobhadra

अथ ६१ रेखात्मकं अष्टमुद्रारामतोभद्रमंडलम् ४३



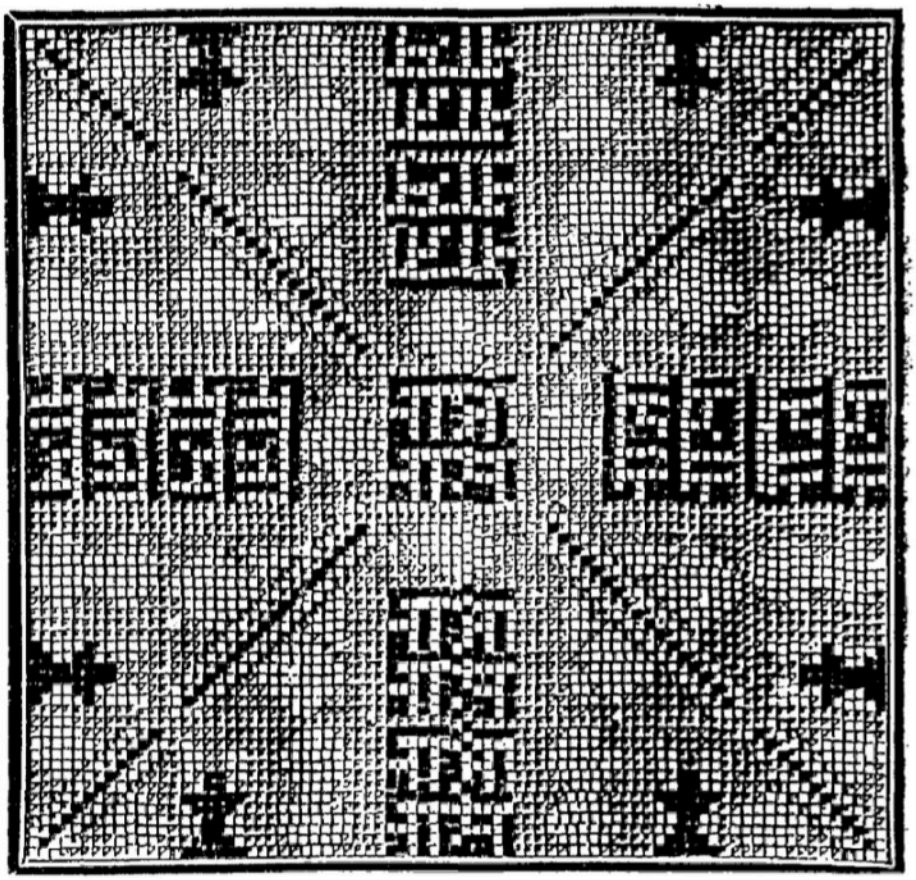
43. Aṣṭamudrārāmatobhadra, type 1

अथ ६१ रेखात्मकं अष्टमुद्रारामलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ४४



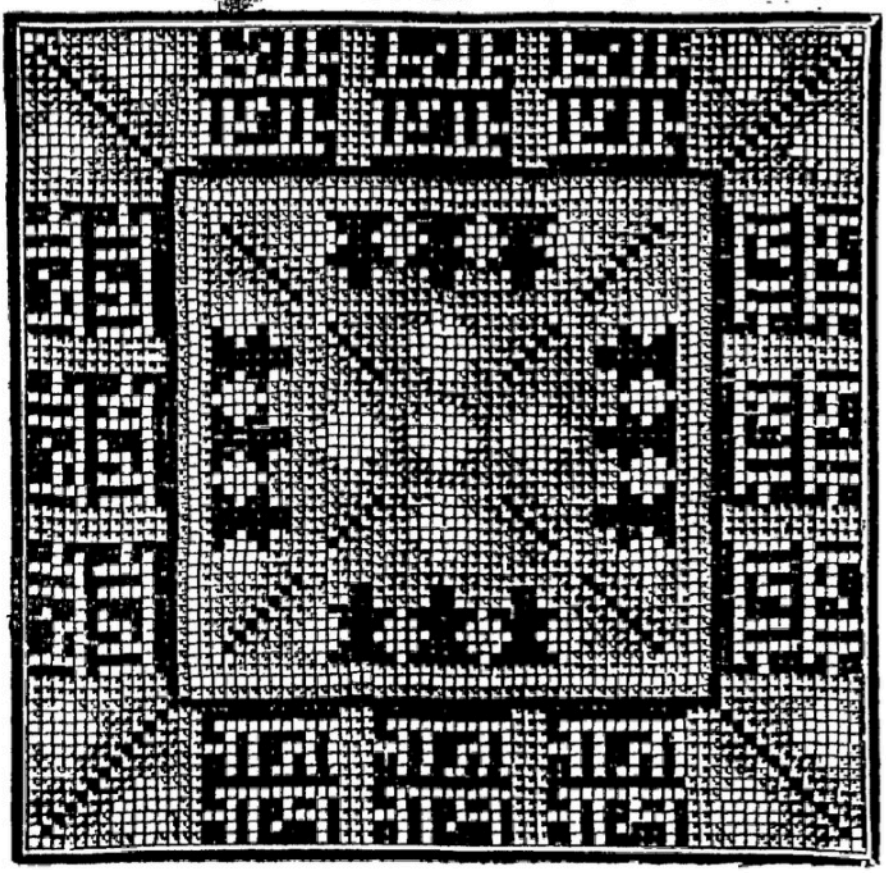
44. Aṣṭamudrārāmatobhadra, type 2

अथ ७९ रेखात्मकं नवमुद्रारामलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ४५



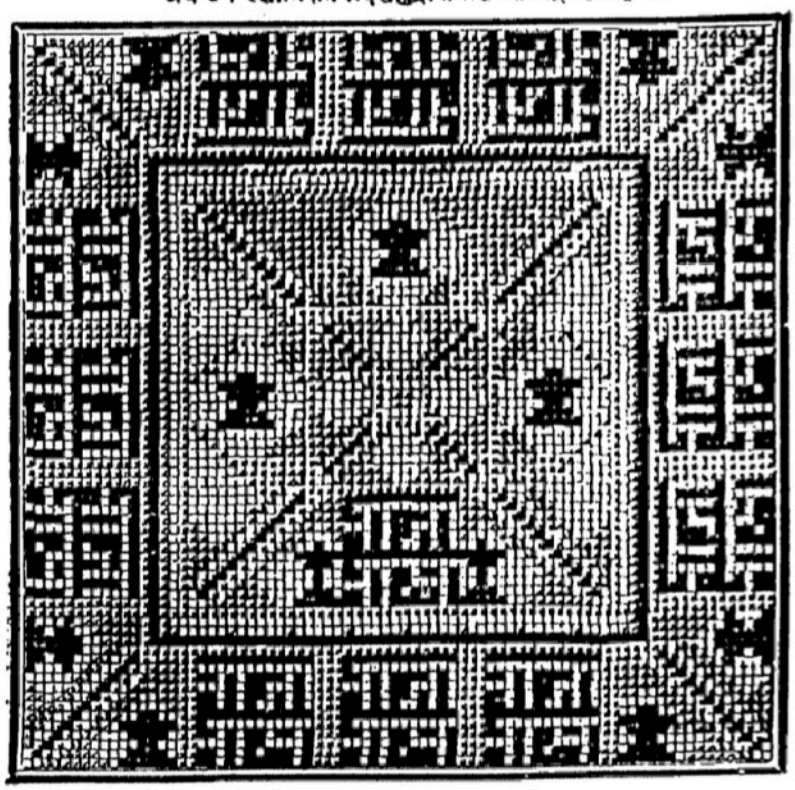
45. Navamudrārāmatobhadra

अथ ७३ रेखात्मकं द्वादशमुद्रारामलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ४६



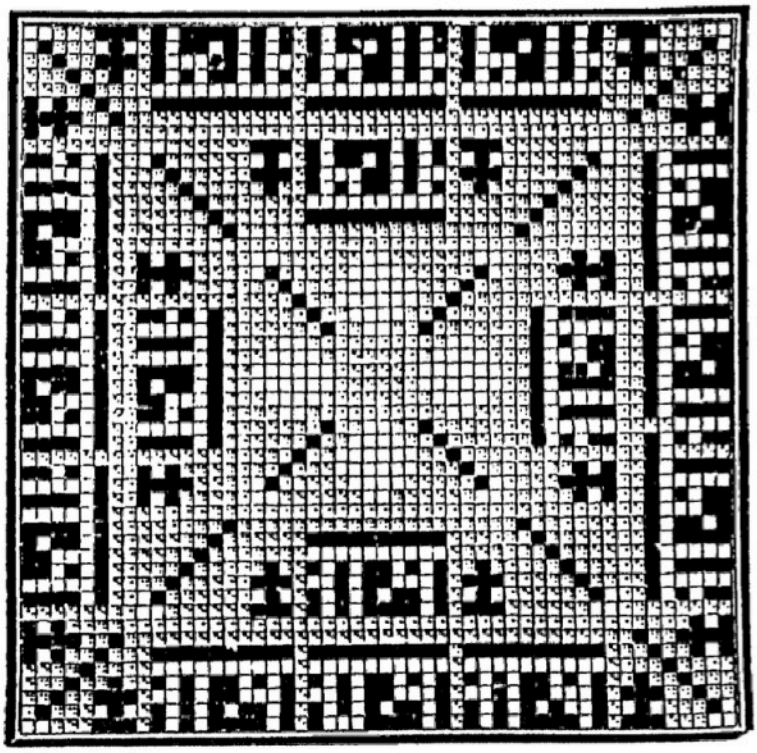
46. Dvādaśamudrārāmaliṅgatobhadra

अथ ७९ रेखात्मकत्रयोदशमुद्रारामलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ४७

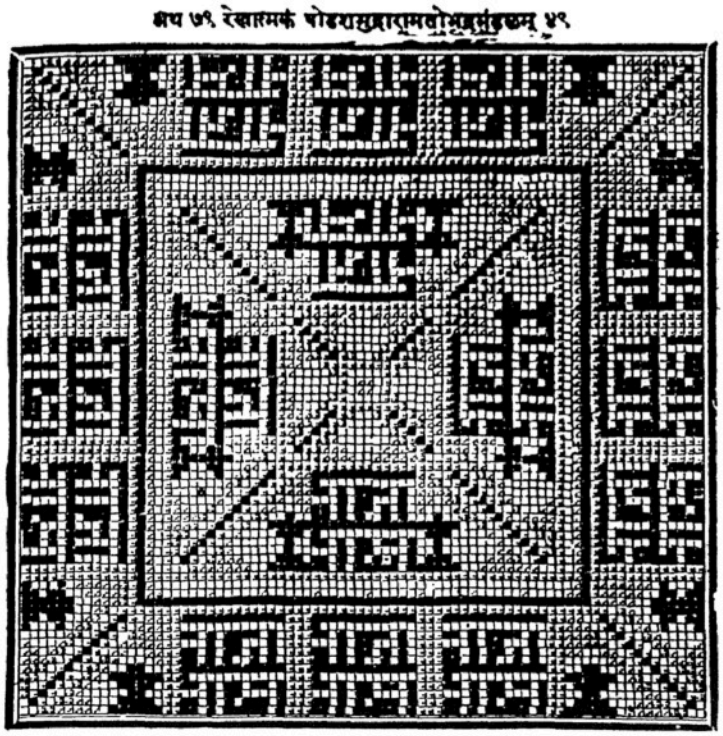


47. Trayodaśamudrārāmatobhadra

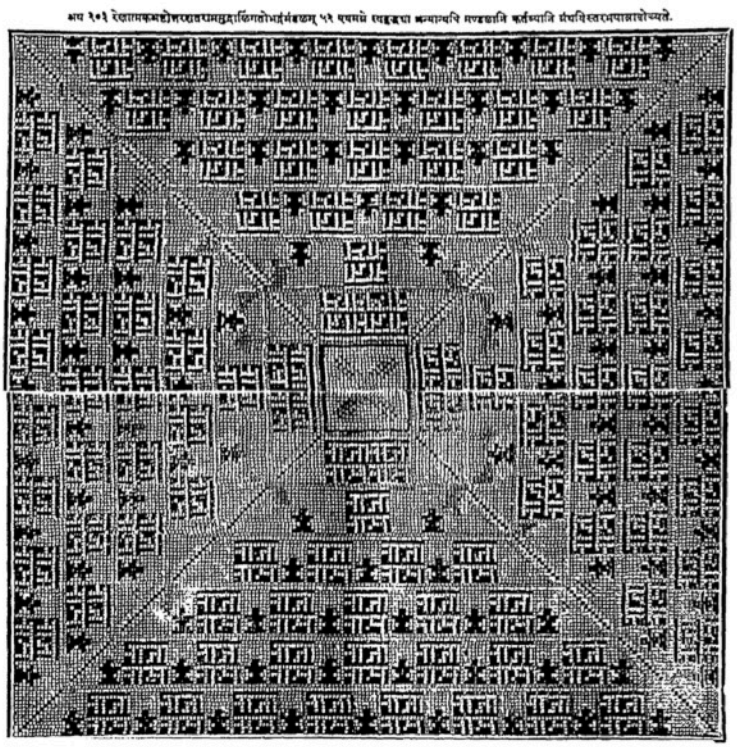
अथ ५१ रेखात्मकलघुषोडशमुद्रारामलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ४८



48. Laghuṣoḍaśarāmamudrārāmaliṅgatobhadra

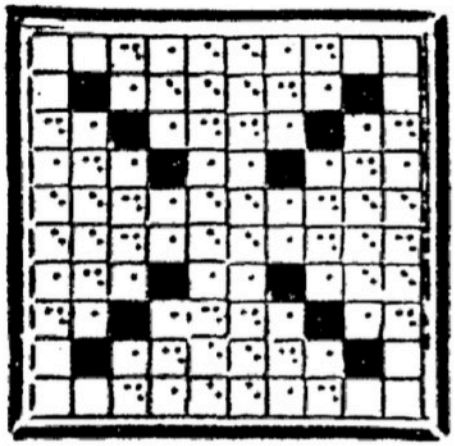


49. Ṣoḍaśamudrārāmatobhadra



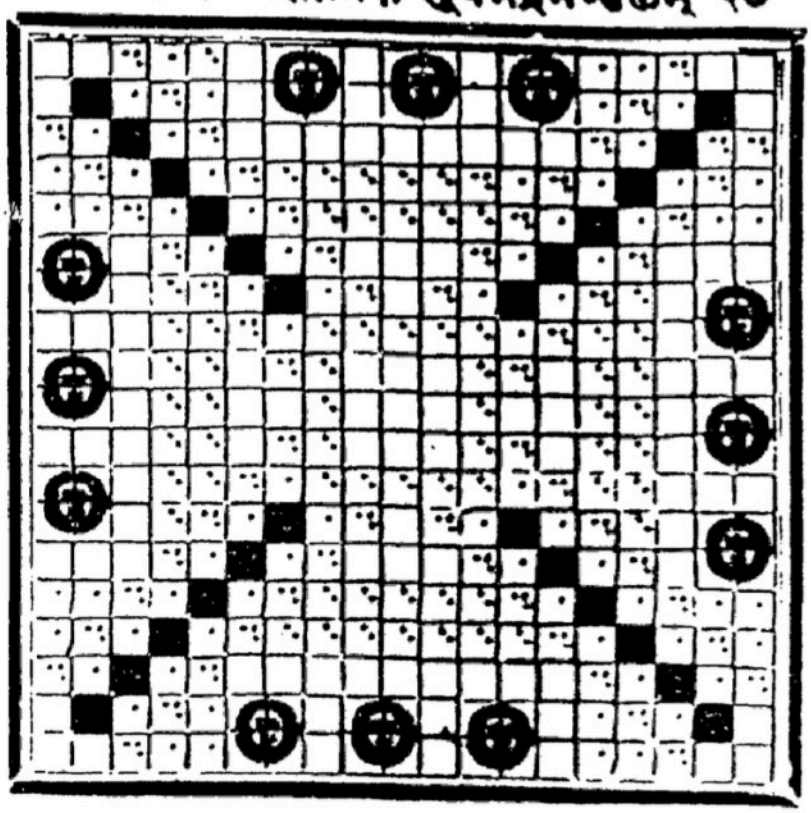
52. Aṣṭottaraśatarāmaliṅgatobhadra

अथ ११ रेखात्मकं पंच
भद्रमंडलं ६६



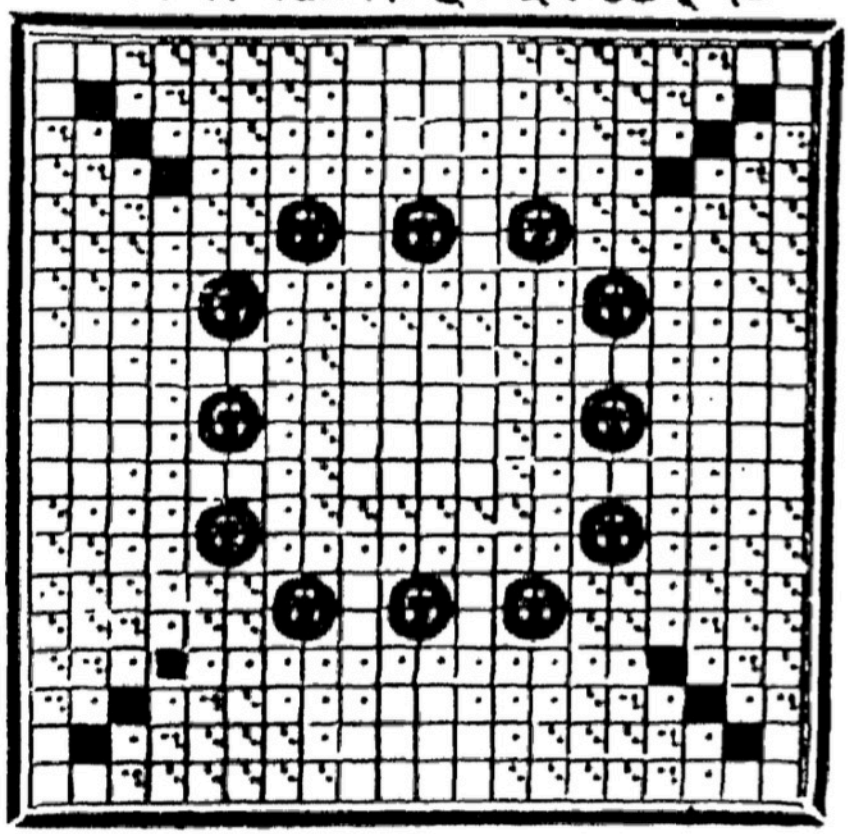
66. Pañcabhadra

अथ २० रेखात्मकं सूर्यभद्रमण्डलम् ६७



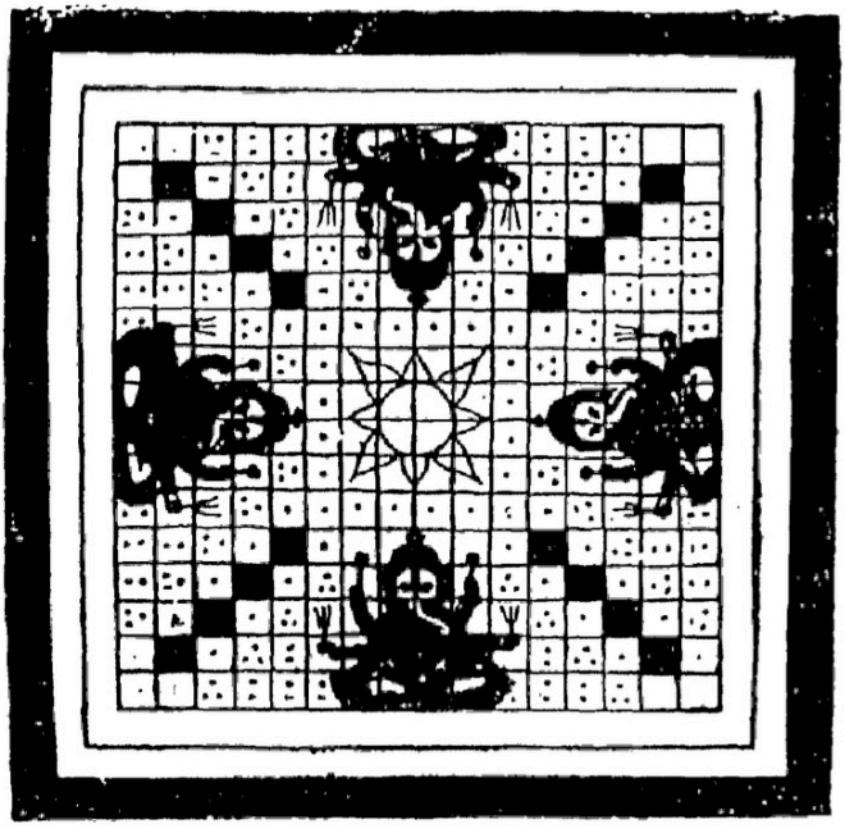
67. Sūryabhadra, type 1

अथ २१ रेखात्मकं सूर्यभद्रमण्डलम् ६८



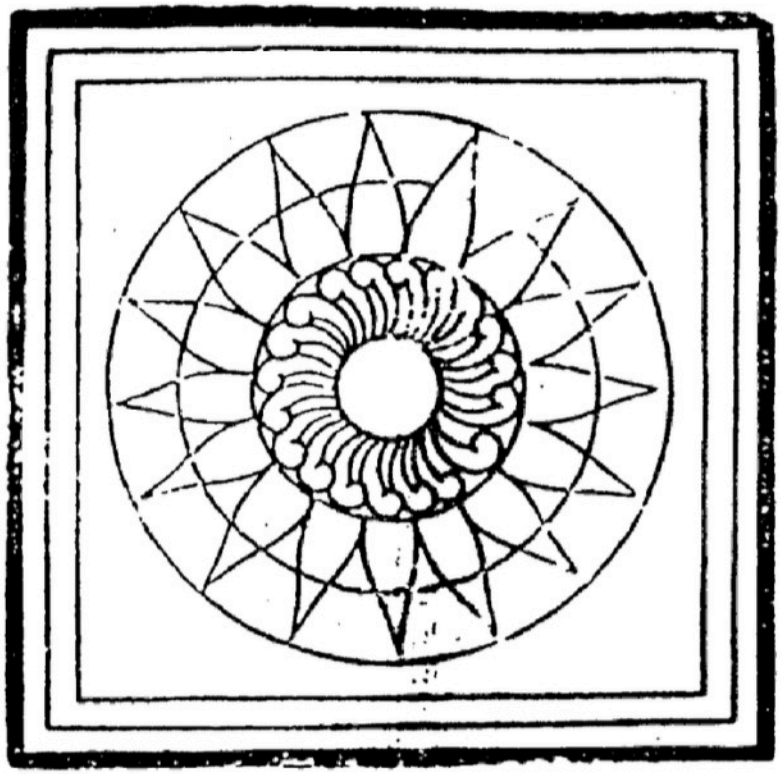
68. Sūryabhadra, type 2

अथ १७ रेखात्मकं गणपतिभद्रमंडलम् ६९



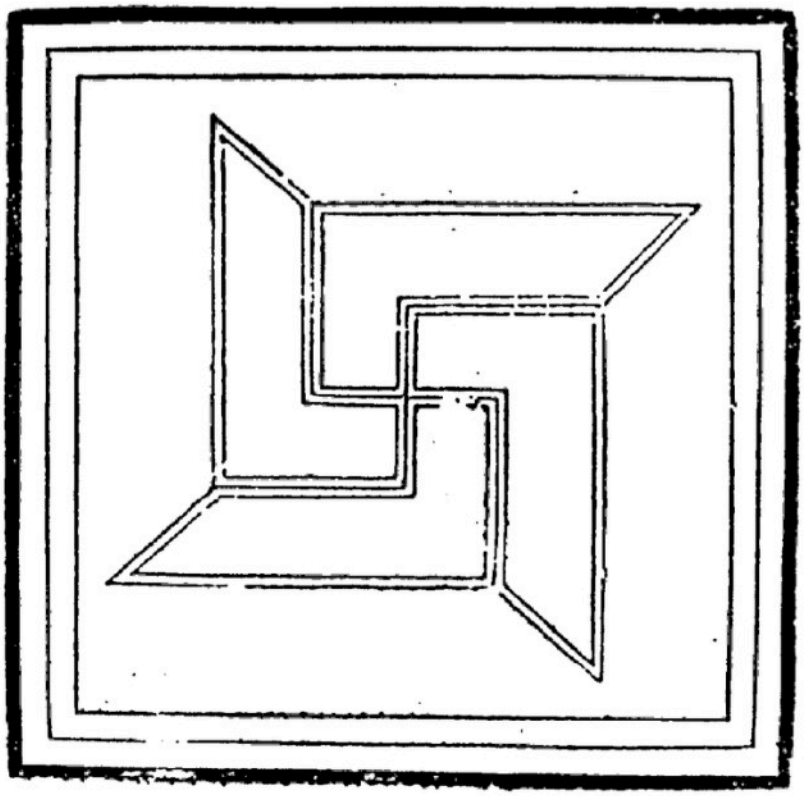
69. Gaṇapatibhadra *vighnamarda*

अथ चक्रारविन्दमंडलम् ७०



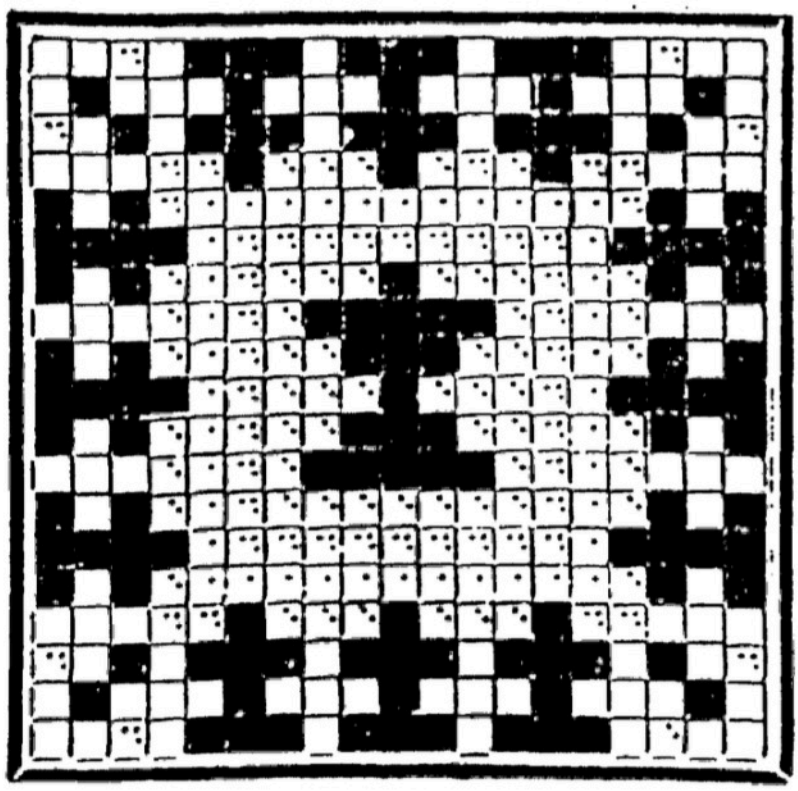
70. Cakrāravindamaṇḍala

अथ स्वस्तिकमंडलम् ७१



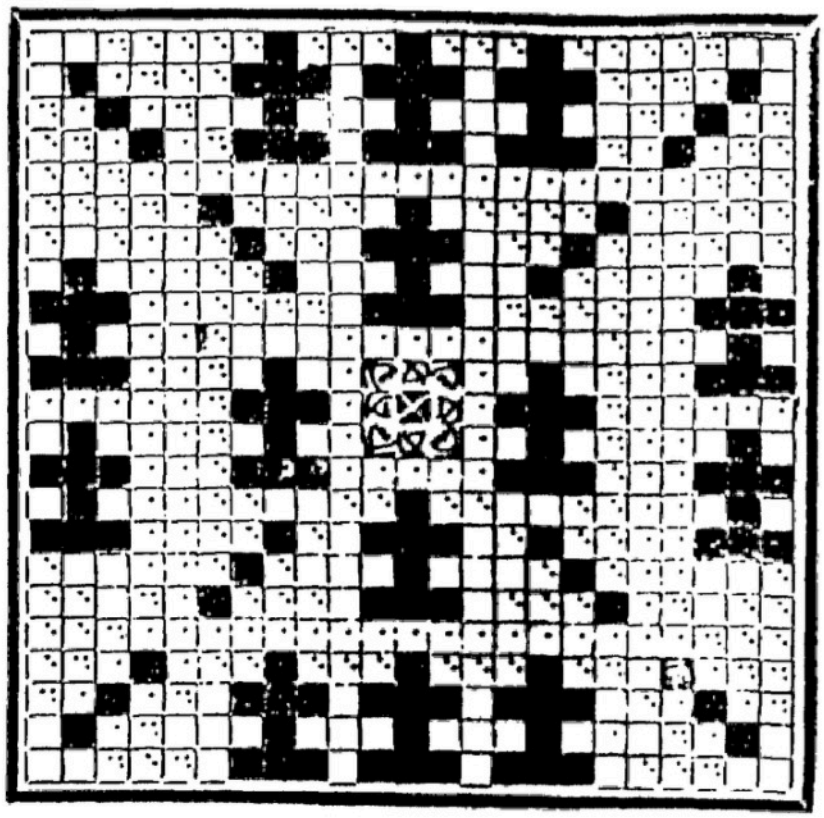
71. Svastikamaṇḍala

अथ २० रेखात्मकं त्रयोदशलिंगतोभद्रमं० ७२



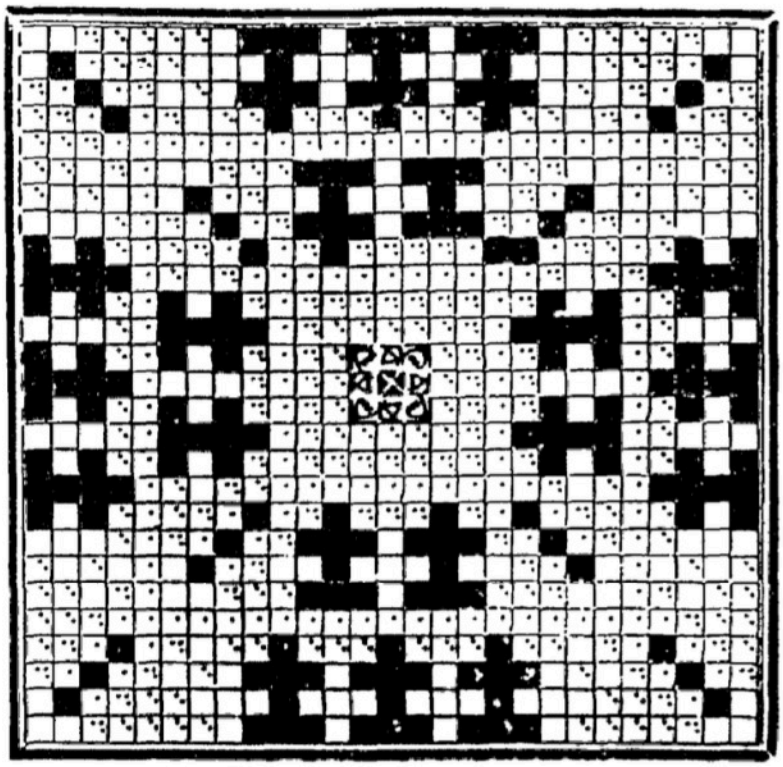
72. Trayodaśaliṅgasamudbhavamaṇḍala

अथ २४ रेखात्मकं चतुर्दशलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ७३



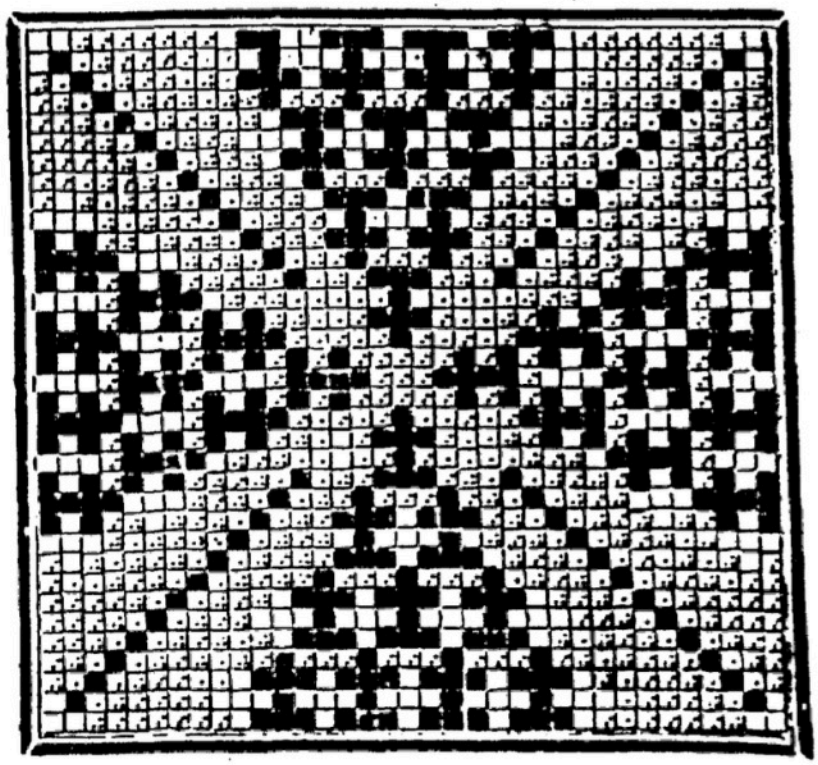
73. Caturdaśaliṅgatobhadra

अथ २८ विंशतिरेखात्मकं विंशतिलिंगतोभद्रमंडलम् ७४



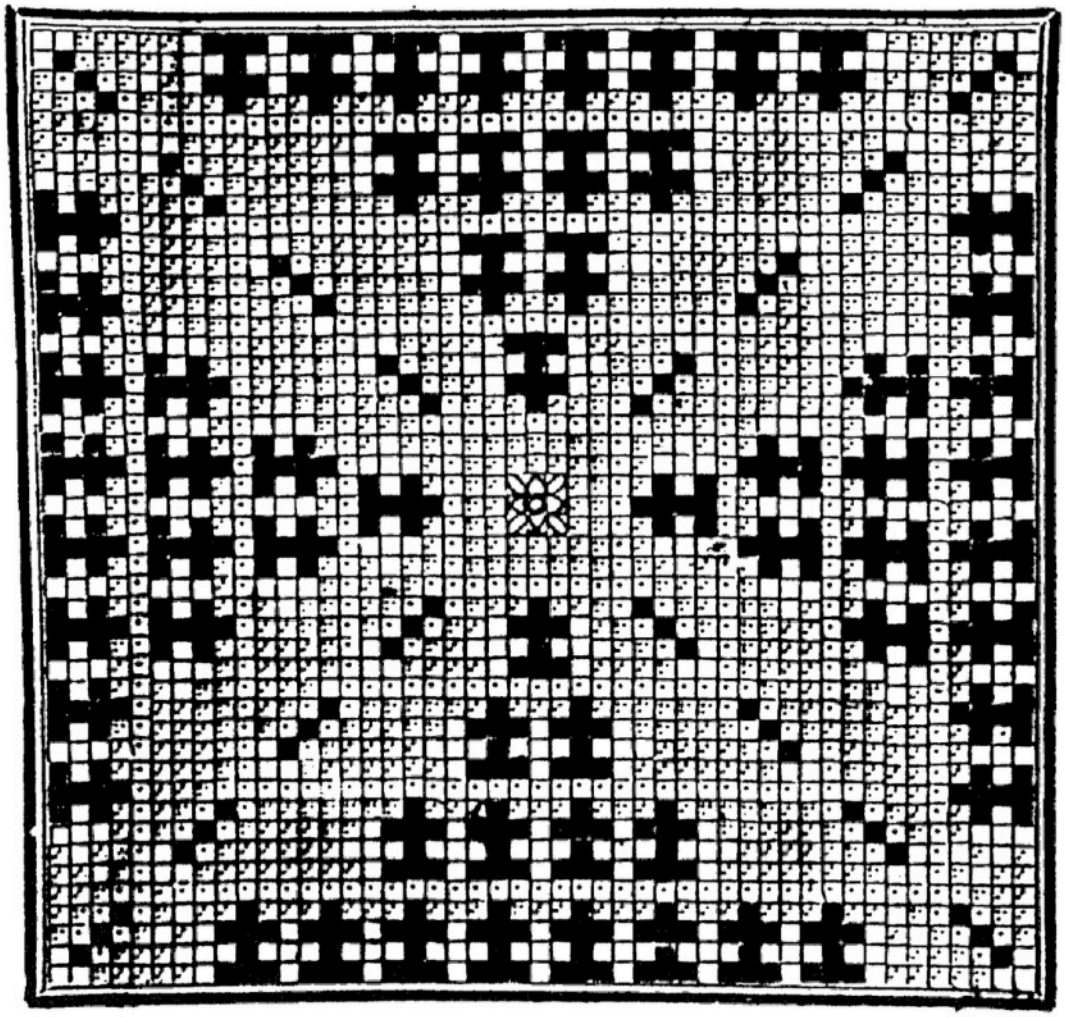
74. Viṃśatiliṅgatobhadra

अथ २६ रेखात्मकं चत्वारिंशल्लिंगतो भद्रमंडलं ७५.

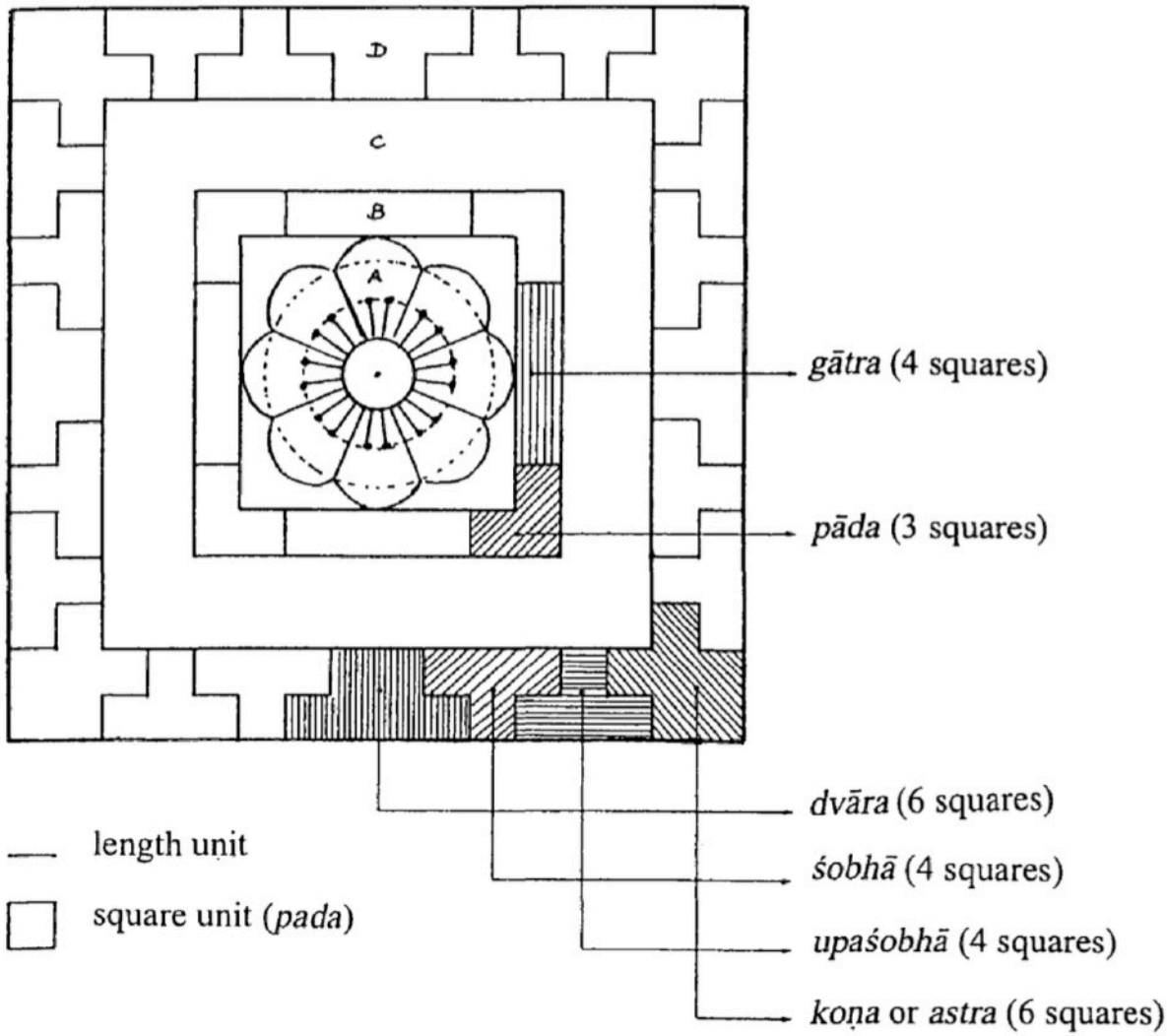


75. Catvāriṃśalliṅgatobhadra

अथ ४८ रेखात्मकं षष्टिलिंगतो भद्रमंडलं ७६.

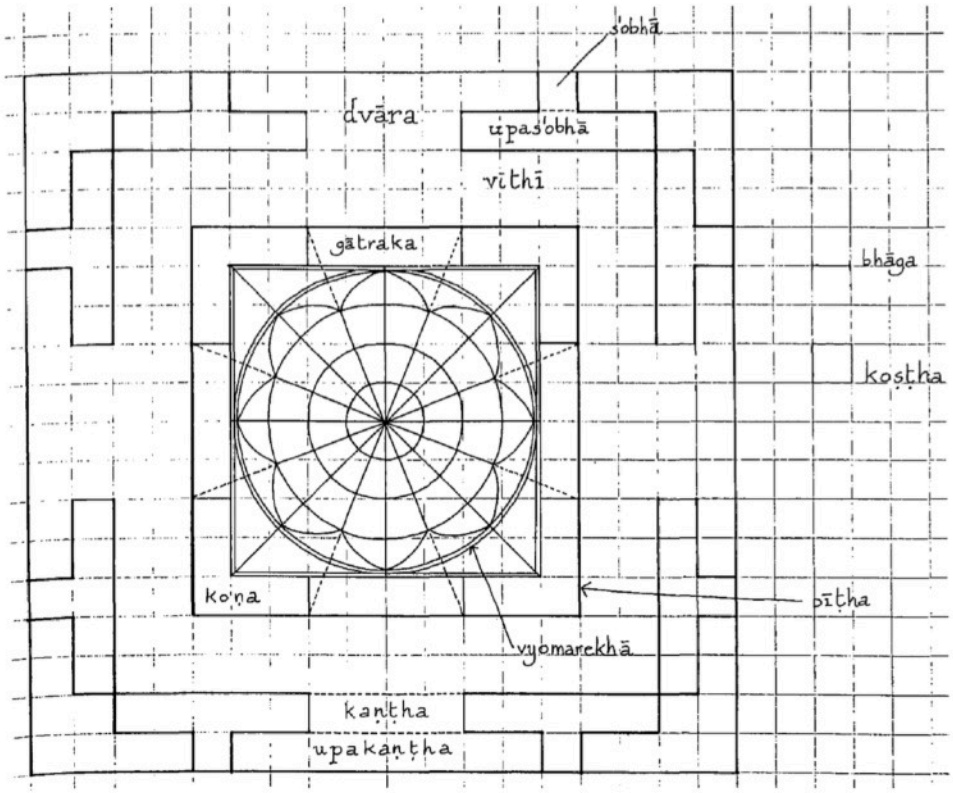


76. Ṣaṣṭiliṅgatobhadra

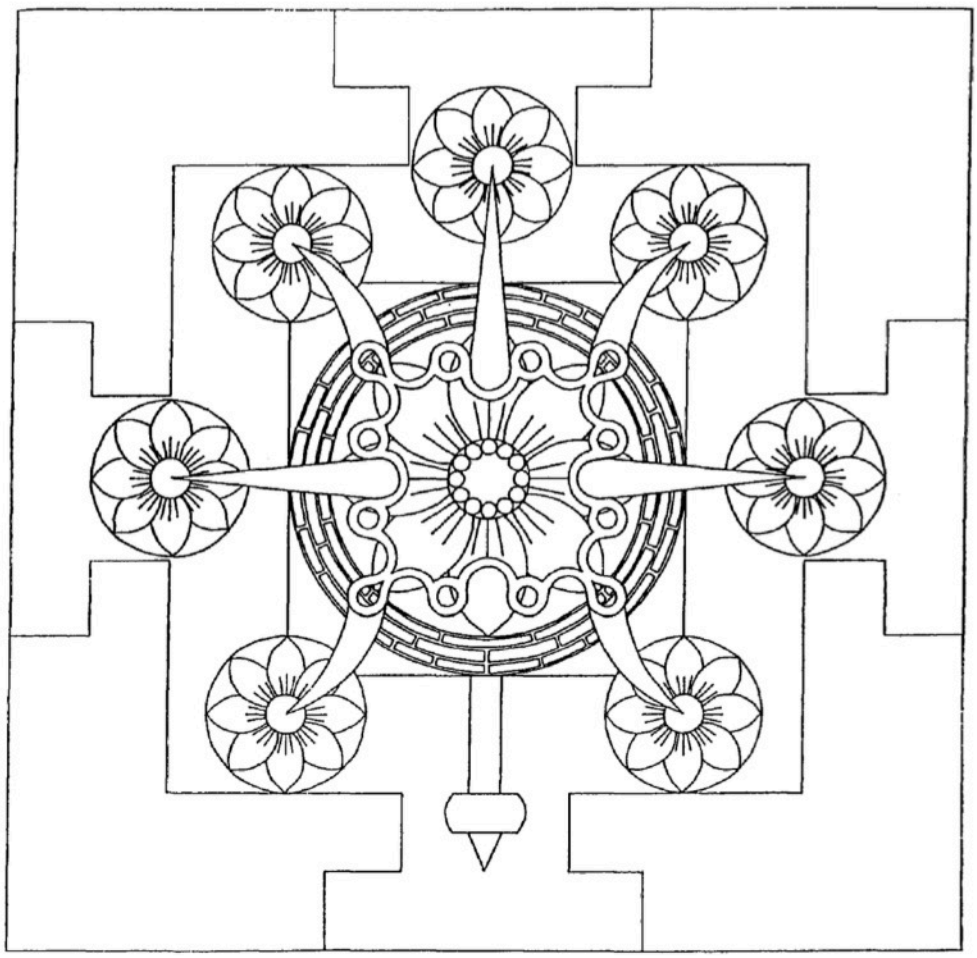


4 zones: A = main lotus (6 x 6 = 36 squares)
B = *pīṭha* (1 unit wide: 28 squares)
C = *vīthī* (2 units wide: 80 squares)
D = *dvāras* + *śobhās* + *upaśobhās* + *koṇas* (112 squares)
(The entire maṇḍala consists of 256 squares.)

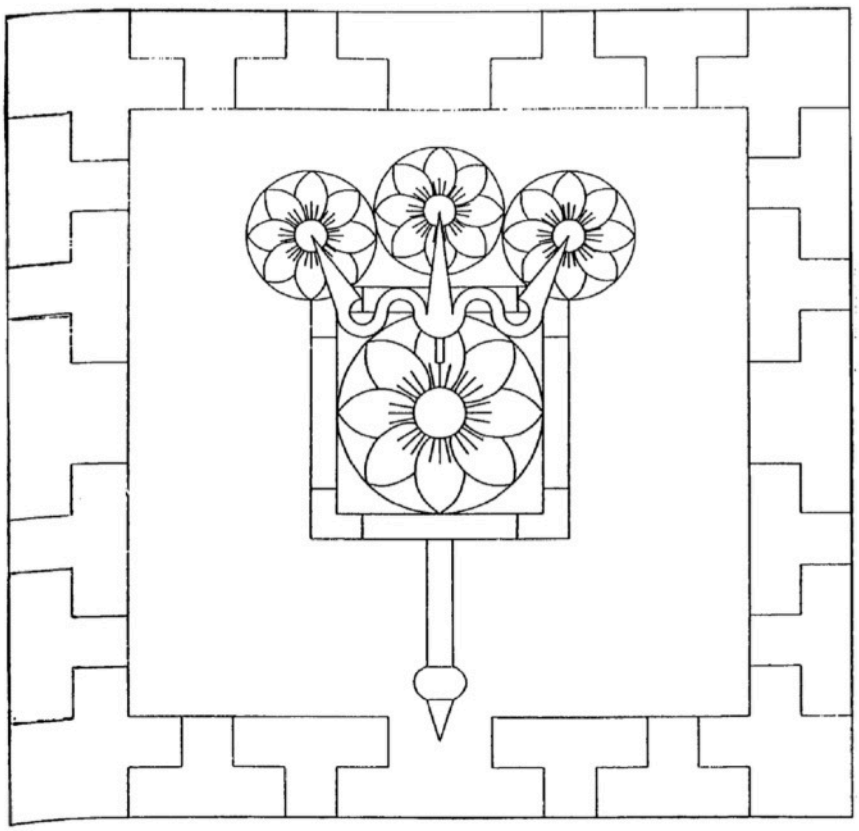
1. The *sarvatobhadramaṇḍala* reconstructed according to the Śāradātilaka and Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary



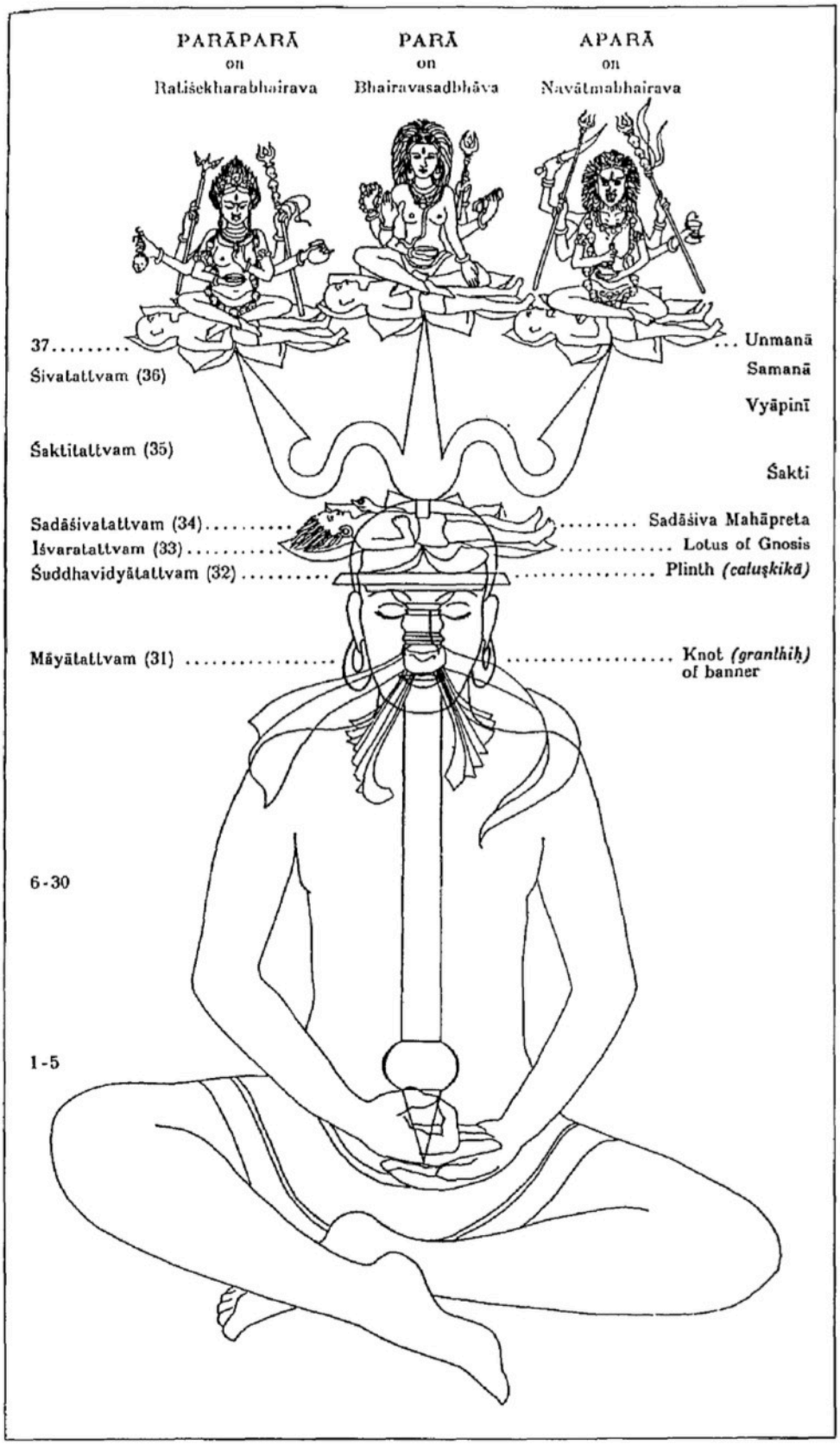
1. The outline and construction of the *śrīmaṇḍala* according to the Netratantra



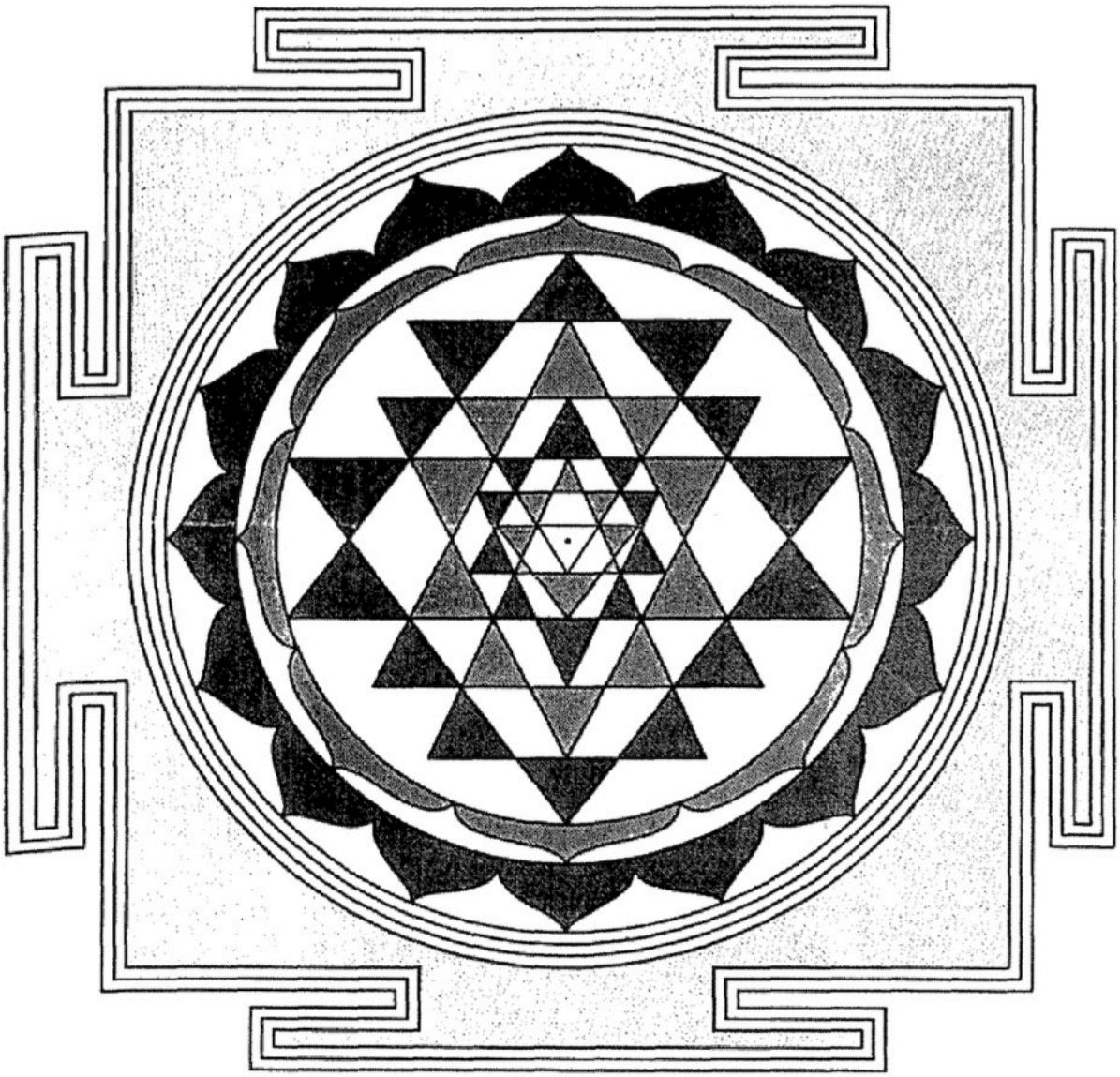
1. Outline of the maṇḍala of the three tridents and (seven) lotuses (*tritriśūlābjamaṇḍala*) prescribed by the Trikasadbhāvatantra



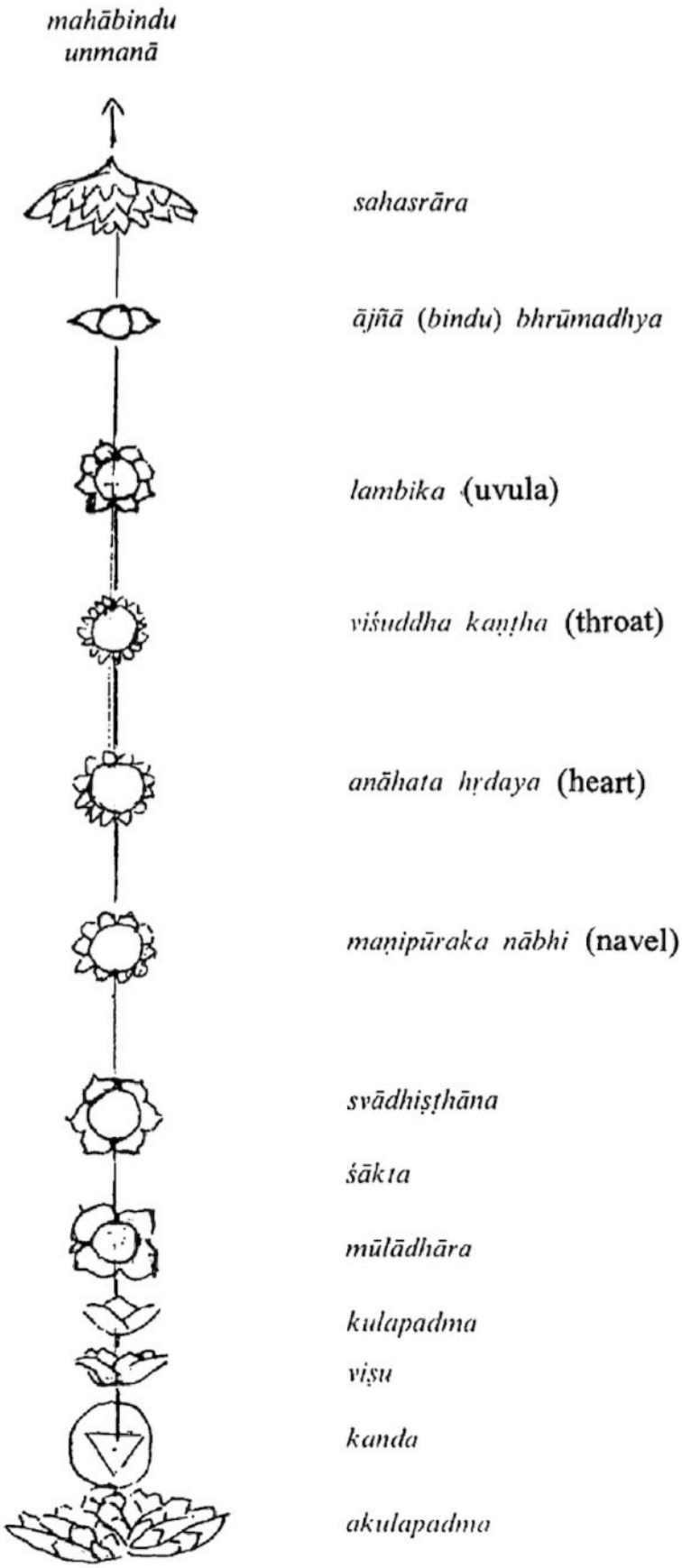
2. Outline of the maṇḍala of the trident and lotuses (*triśūlābjamaṇḍala*) prescribed by the Mālinīvijayottaratantra



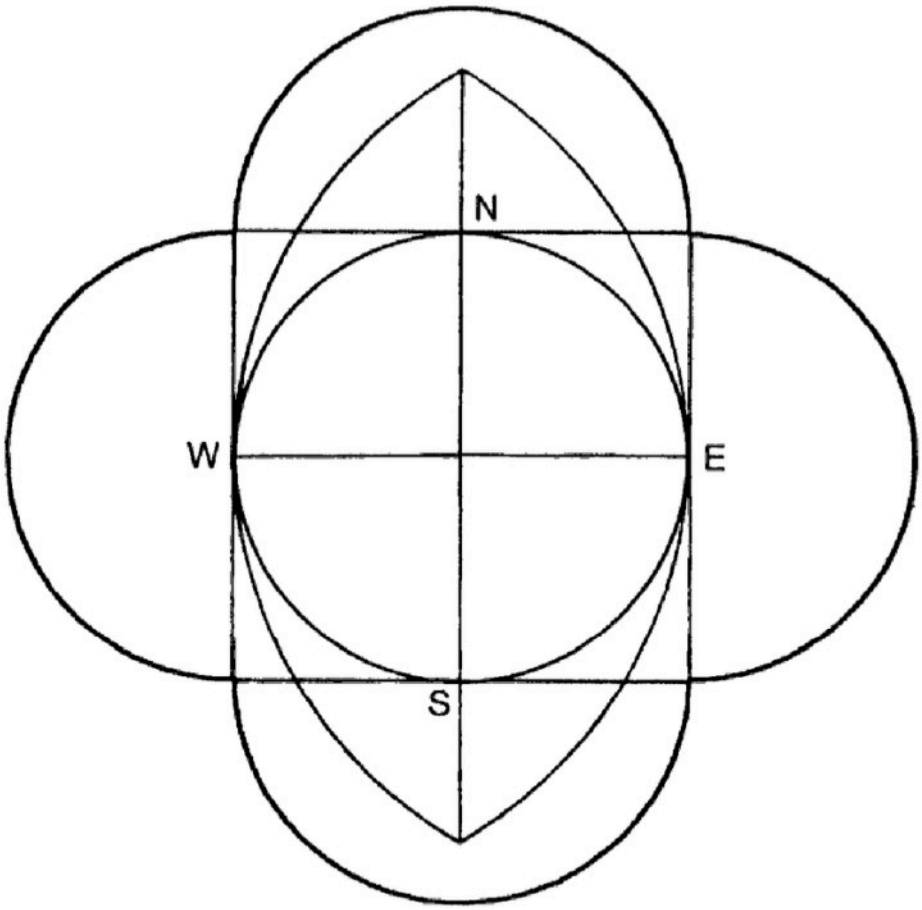
3. Visualization of the maṇḍala throne of the three goddesses of the Trika



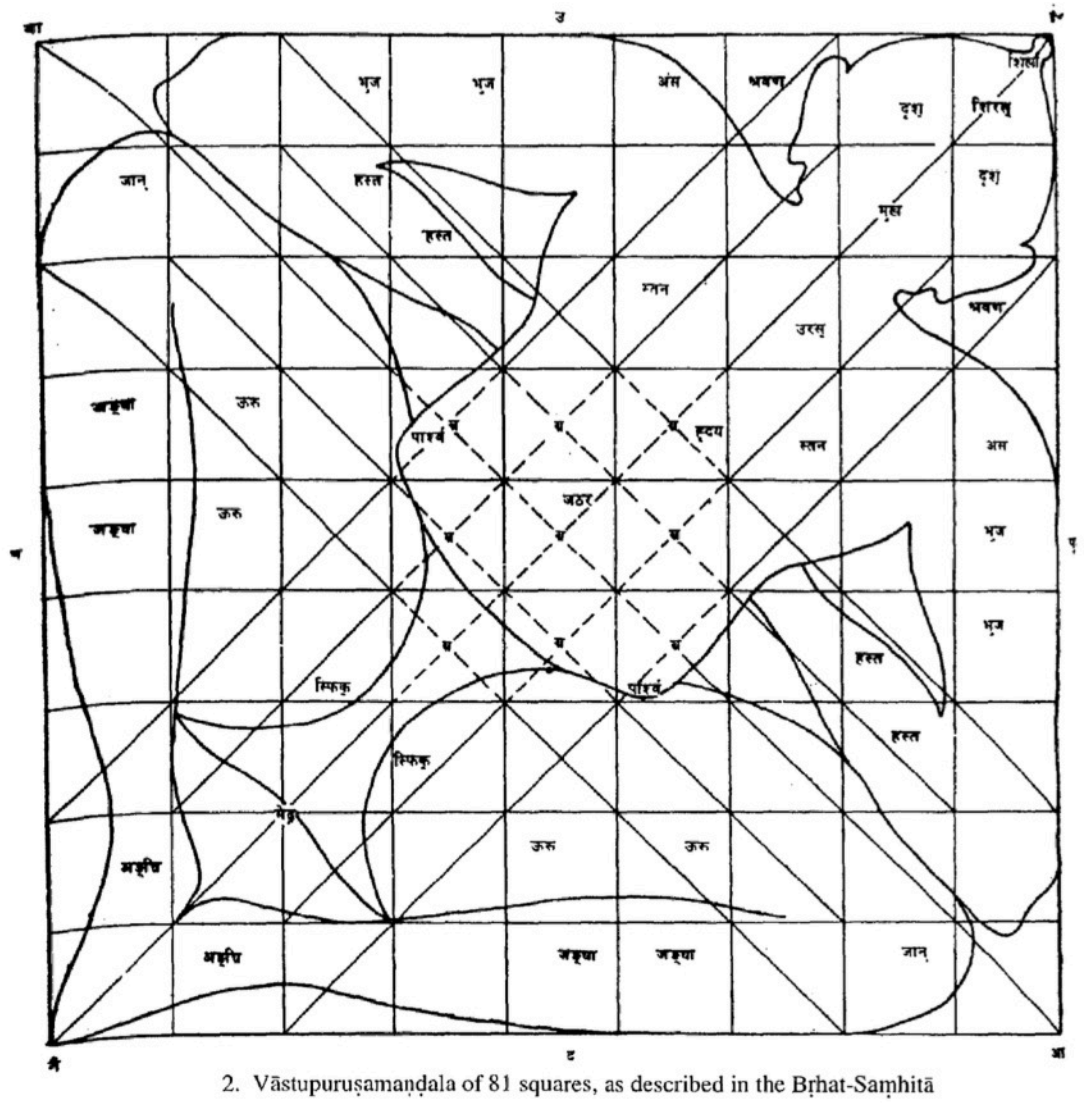
1. The *śrīcakra*



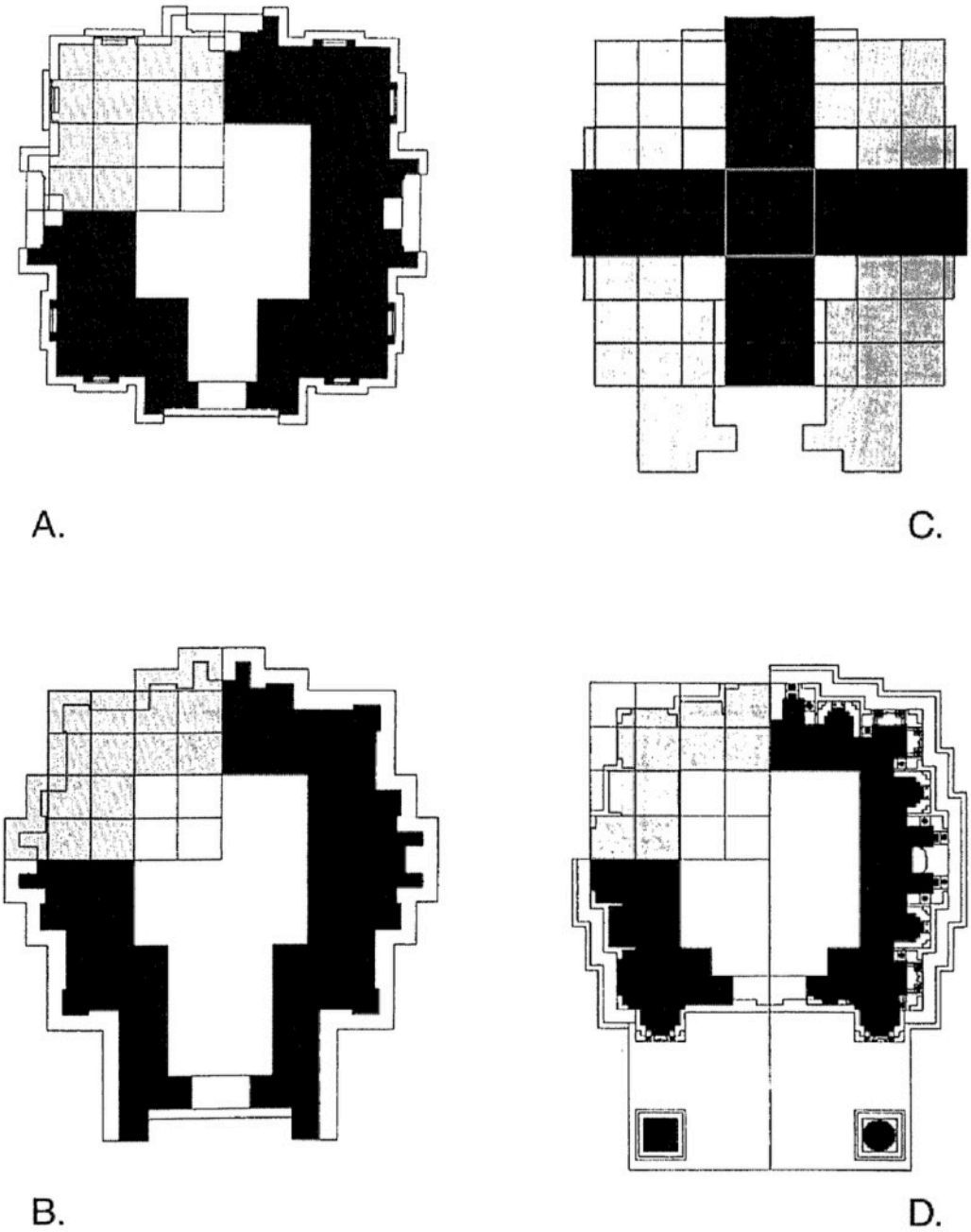
2. The bodily cakras according to Amṛtānanda's commentary on the Yoginīhṛdaya



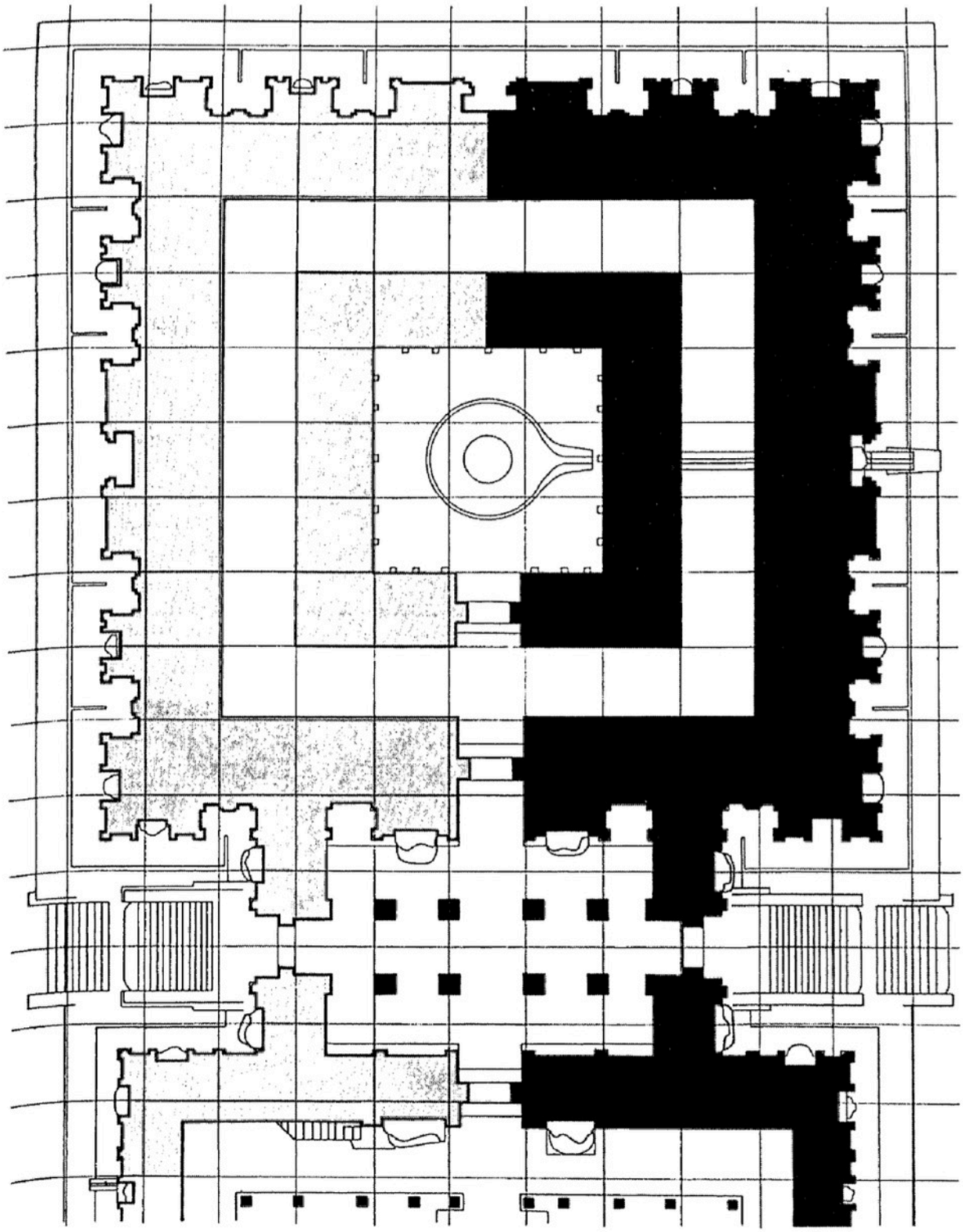
1. The geometric construction of a cardinally oriented square locating an altar as defined in Śulba-Sūtra texts



2. Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala of 81 squares, as described in the Bṛhat-Saṃhitā

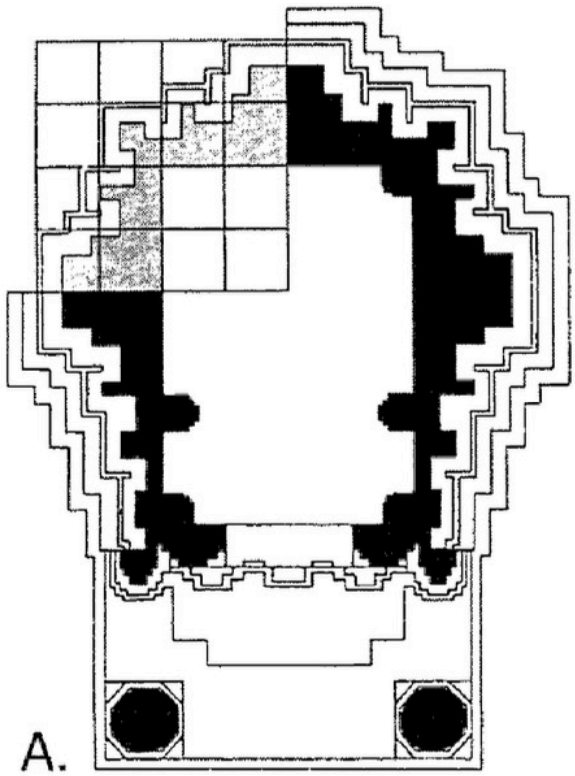


3. Ground plans and constructing maṇḍalas: A. Bharateśvara temple, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa; B. Śiva temple no. 2, Mahuā, Madhya Pradesh; C. Mahādeva temple, Amrol, Madhya Pradesh; D. Naktimātā temple, Bhavanipur, Rajasthan

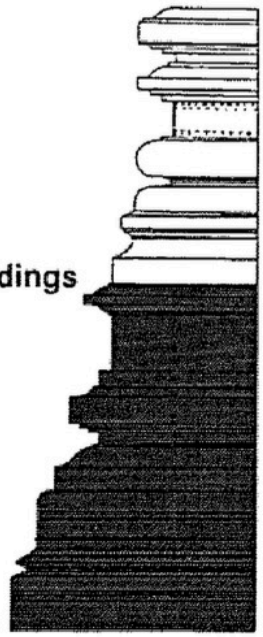


4. Bṛhadīśvara temple, Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōḷapuram, Tamilnadu

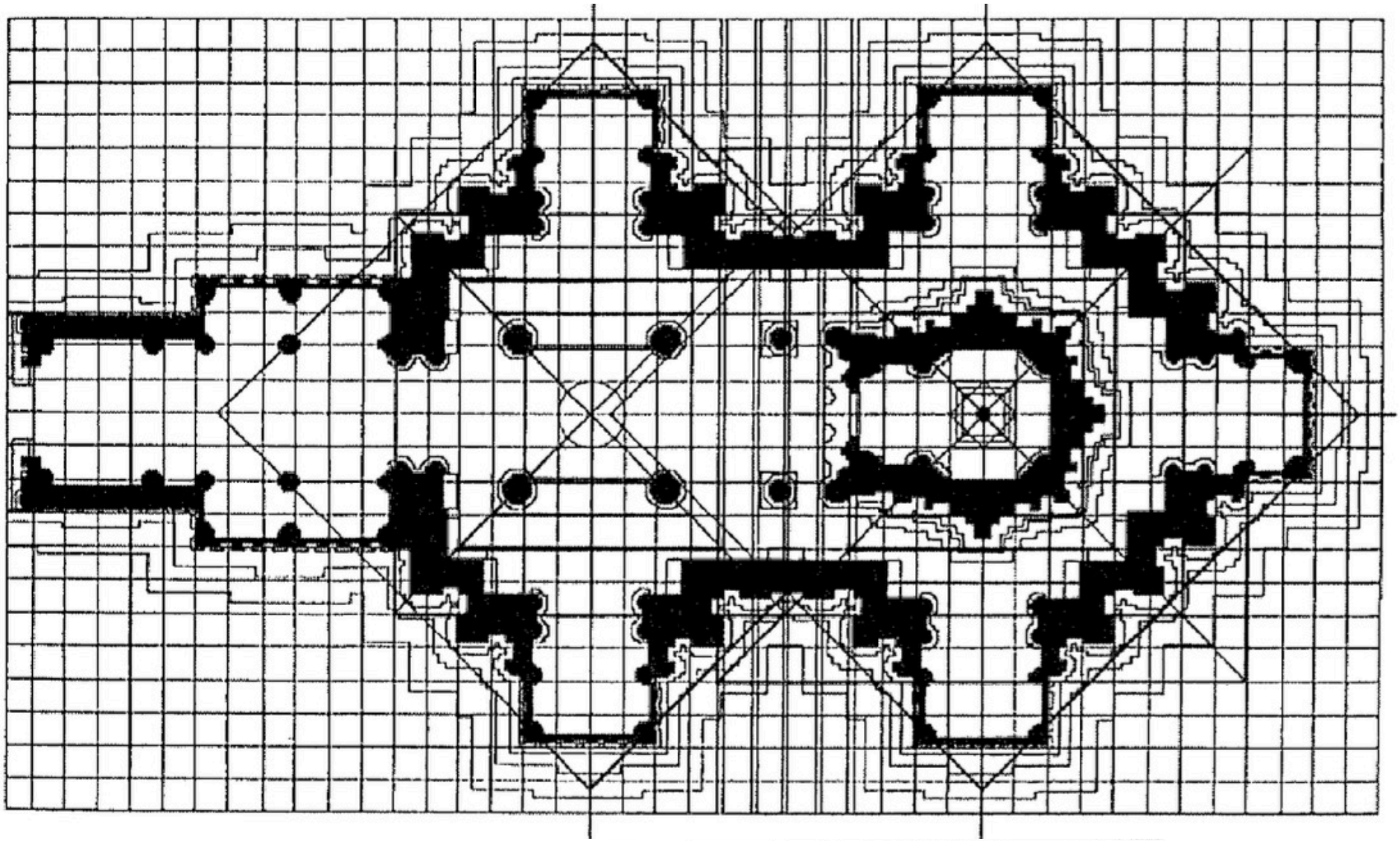
C.



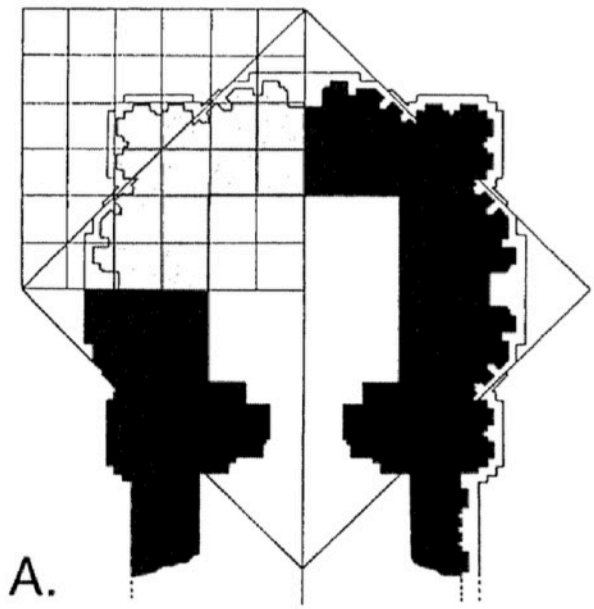
A.

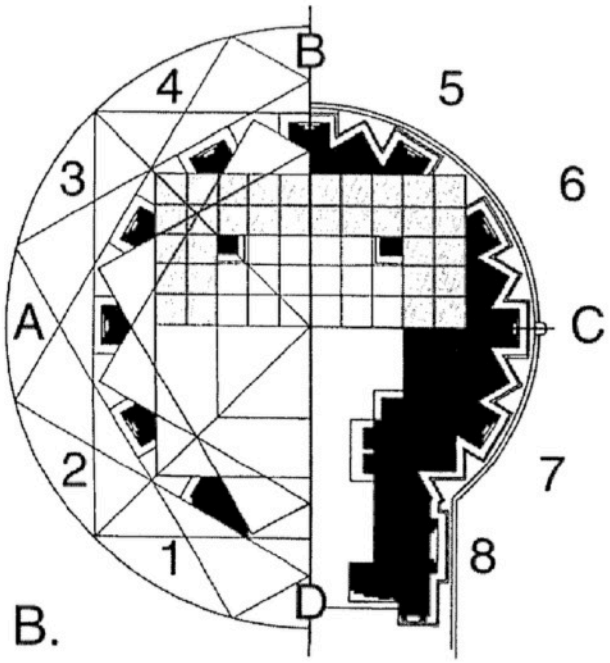


B.

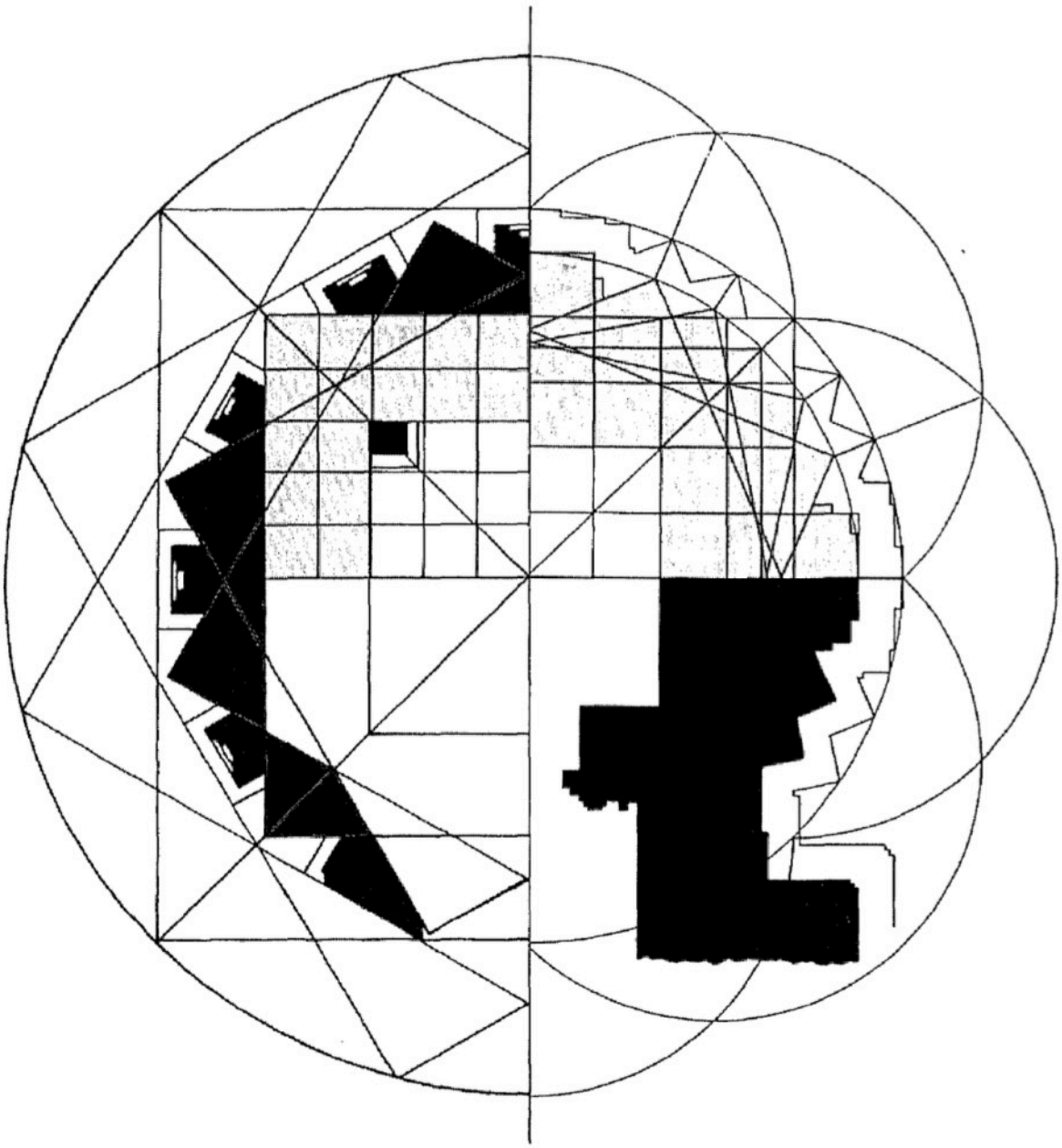


5. Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh: A. Viśvanātha temple; B. Lakṣmaṇa temple, socle and *vedībandha* mouldings; C. Kandariyā Mahādeva temple

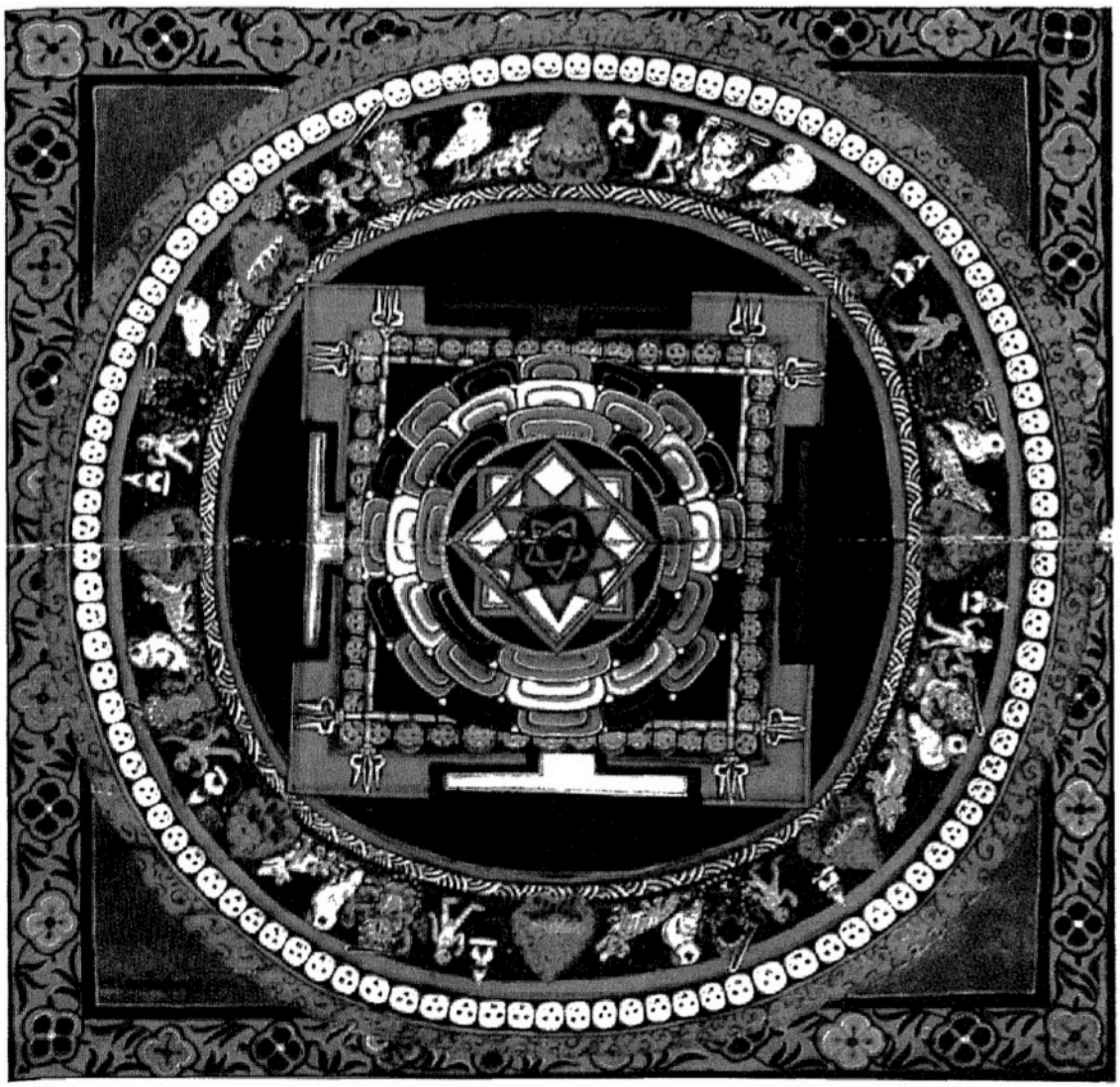




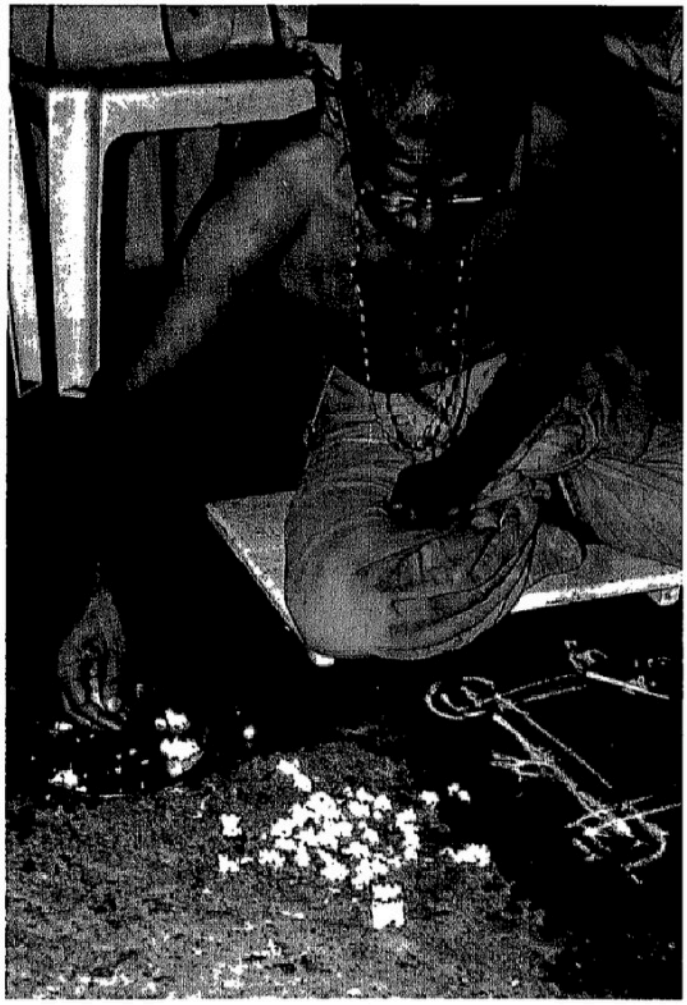
6. A. Śabarī temple, Kharod, Madhya Pradesh; B. Gargaj Mahādeva temple, Indor, Madhya Pradesh



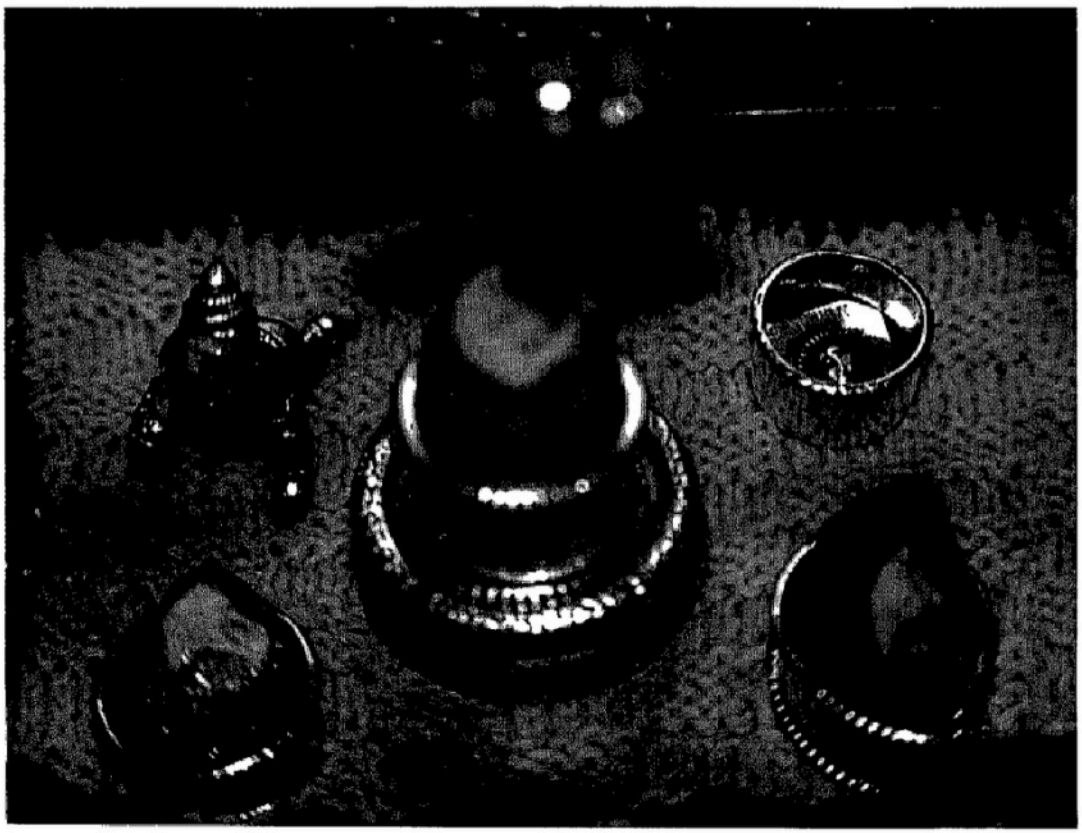
7. Comparison of the use of constructing geometry and odd-numbered grids in plans based on three and six turned squares



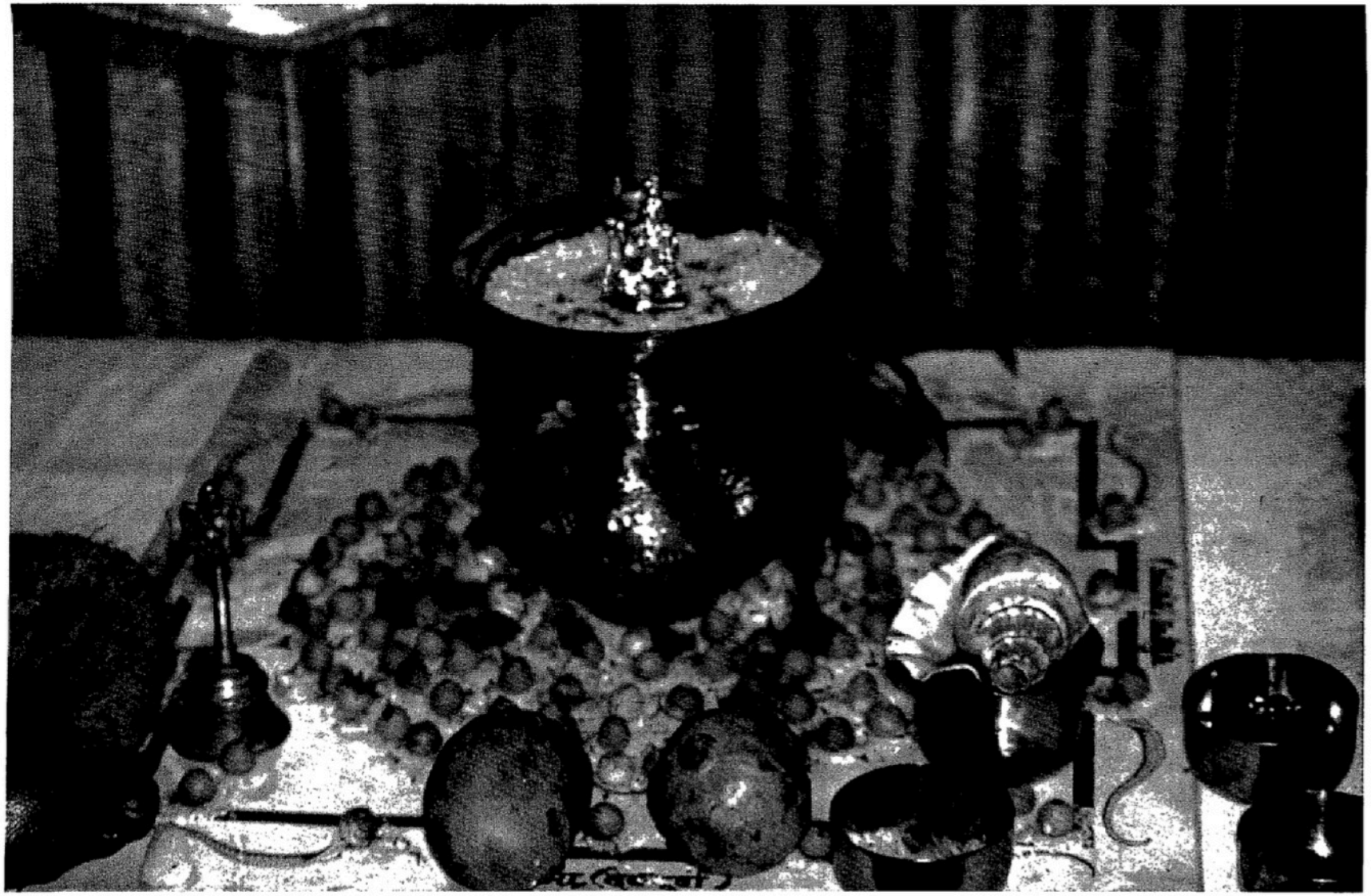
1. A yantra of Guhyakālī



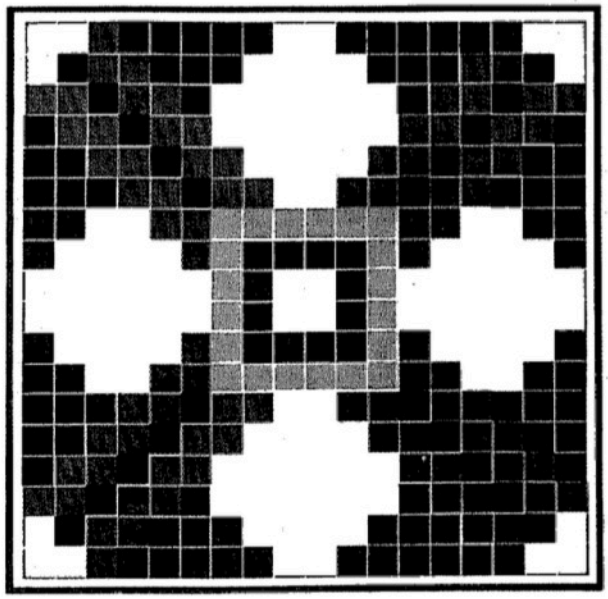
2. The *baliharaṇa* of the *vaiśvadeva* rite



3. A domestic *śivapañcāyatana*

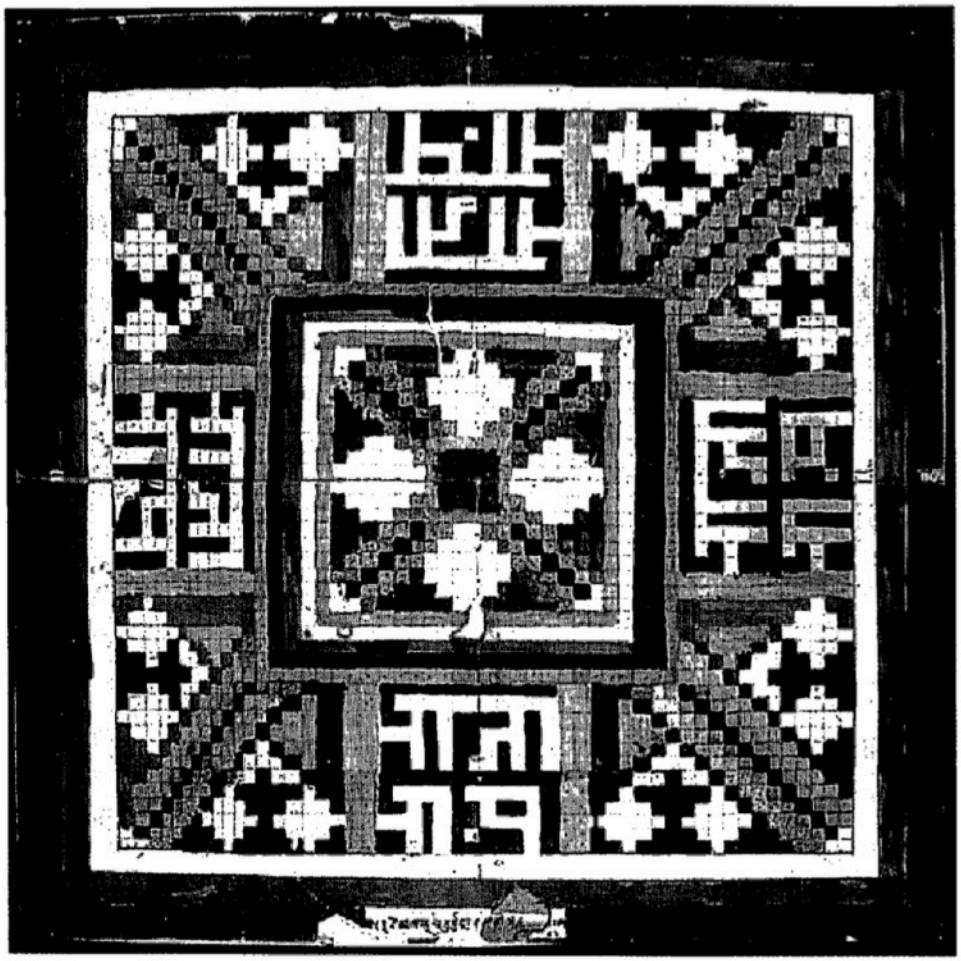


4. A *rudrapīṭhamahāyantra*

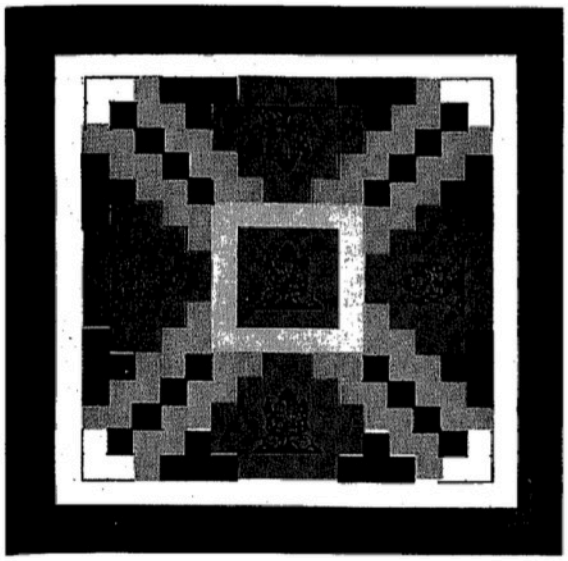


5. A *sarvatobhadra*

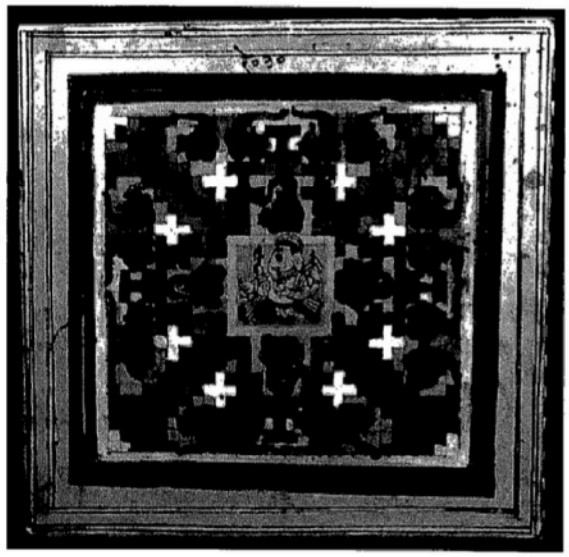
6. A *rāmaliṅgatobhadra* with 26 *rāmamudrās* and 28 *liṅgas*



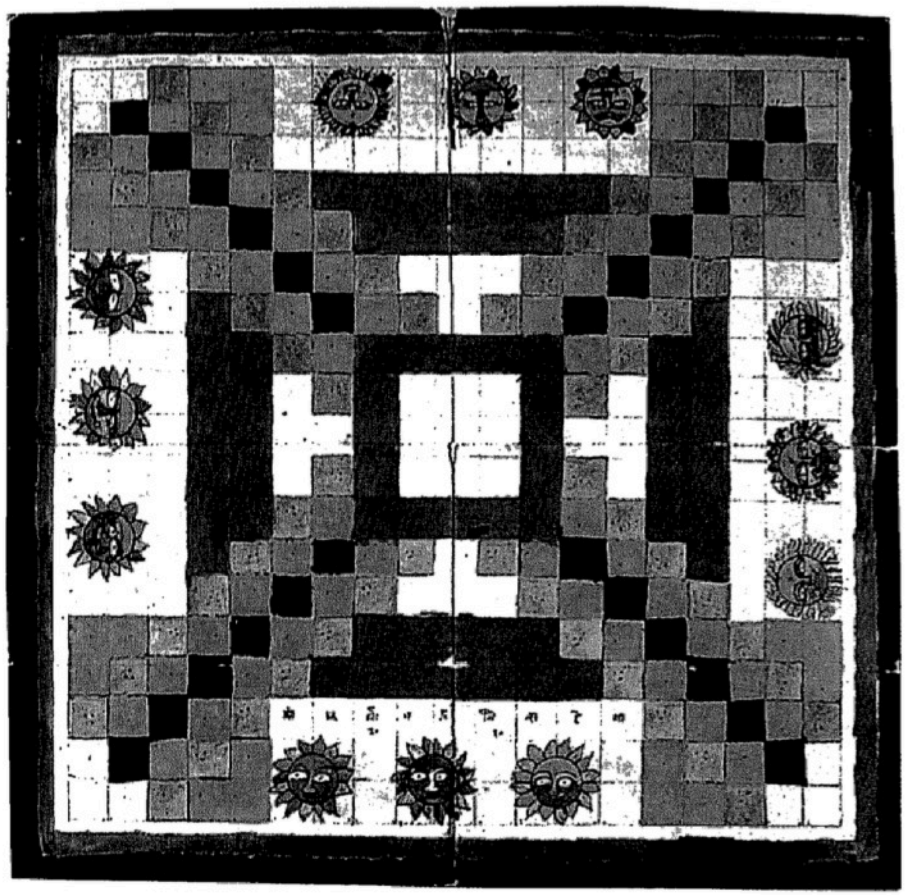
7. A *caturmudrārāmaliṅgatobhadra* with 4 *rāmamudrās* and 8 *liṅgas* and a *sarvatobhadra* in the centre



8. A *gaṇeśabhadra* with five icons of Gaṇeśa



9. A *gaṇeśabhadra* with 21 icons of Gaṇeśa

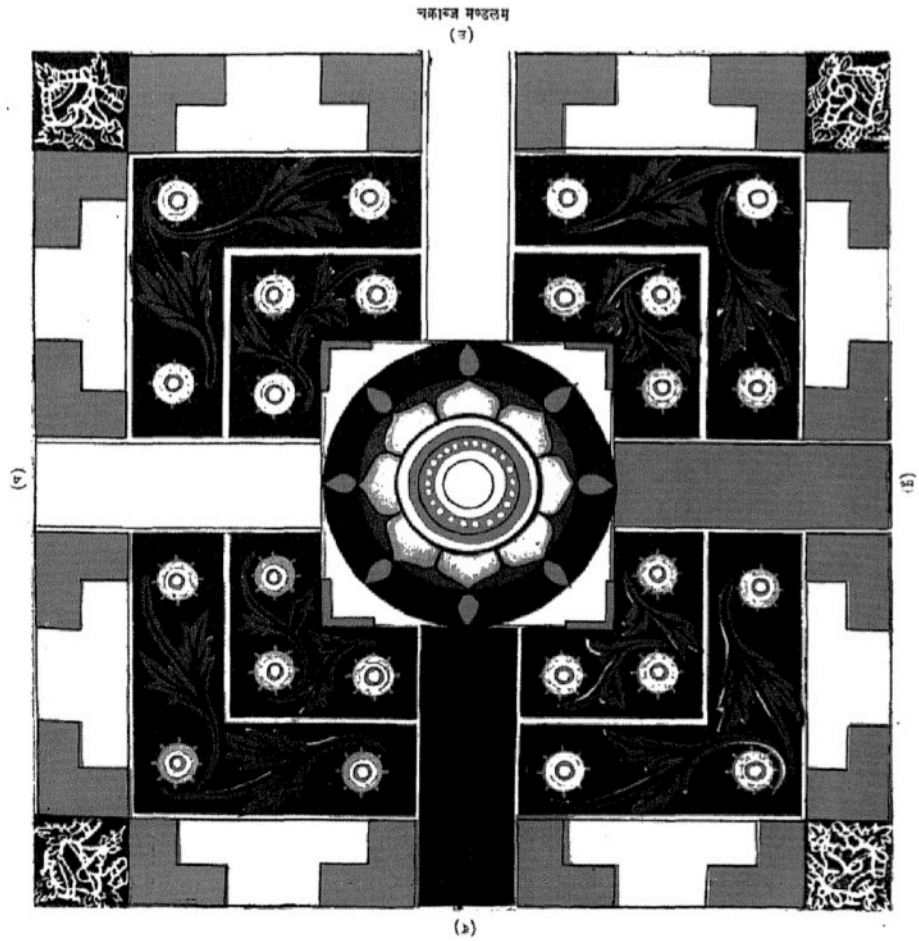


10. A *sūryabhadra* with 12 icons of the sun

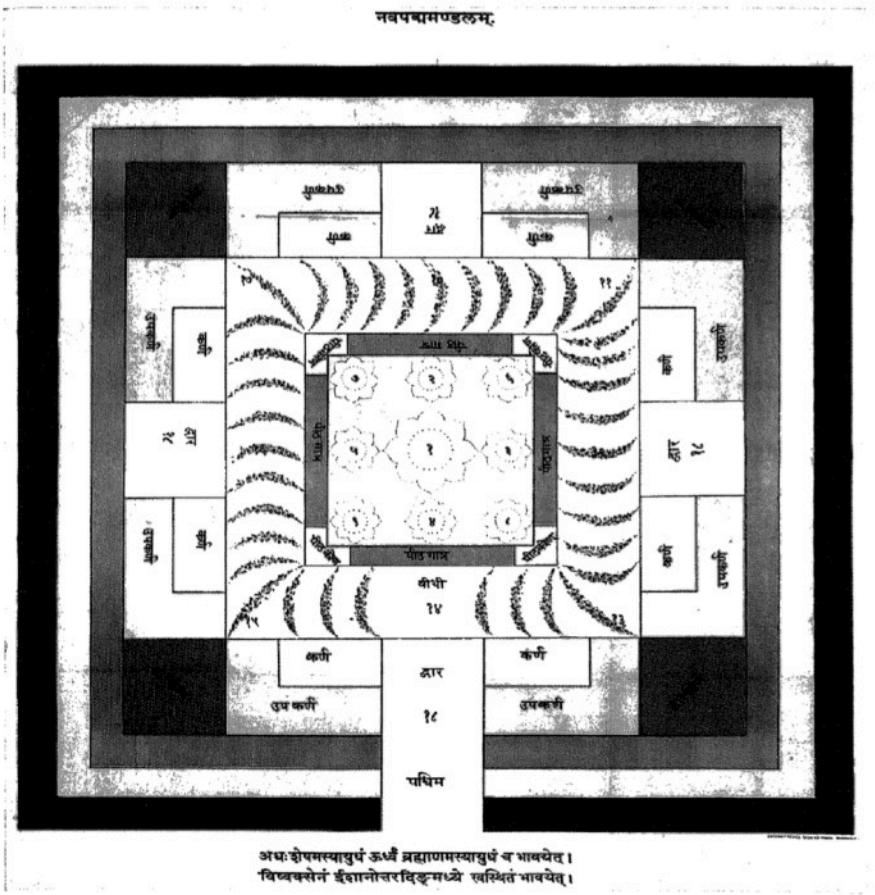
11. The construction of a *dvādaśaliṅgatobhadra* with a *sarvatobhadra* in the centre

12. The invocation of deities into areca nuts placed on a *sarvatobhadra*

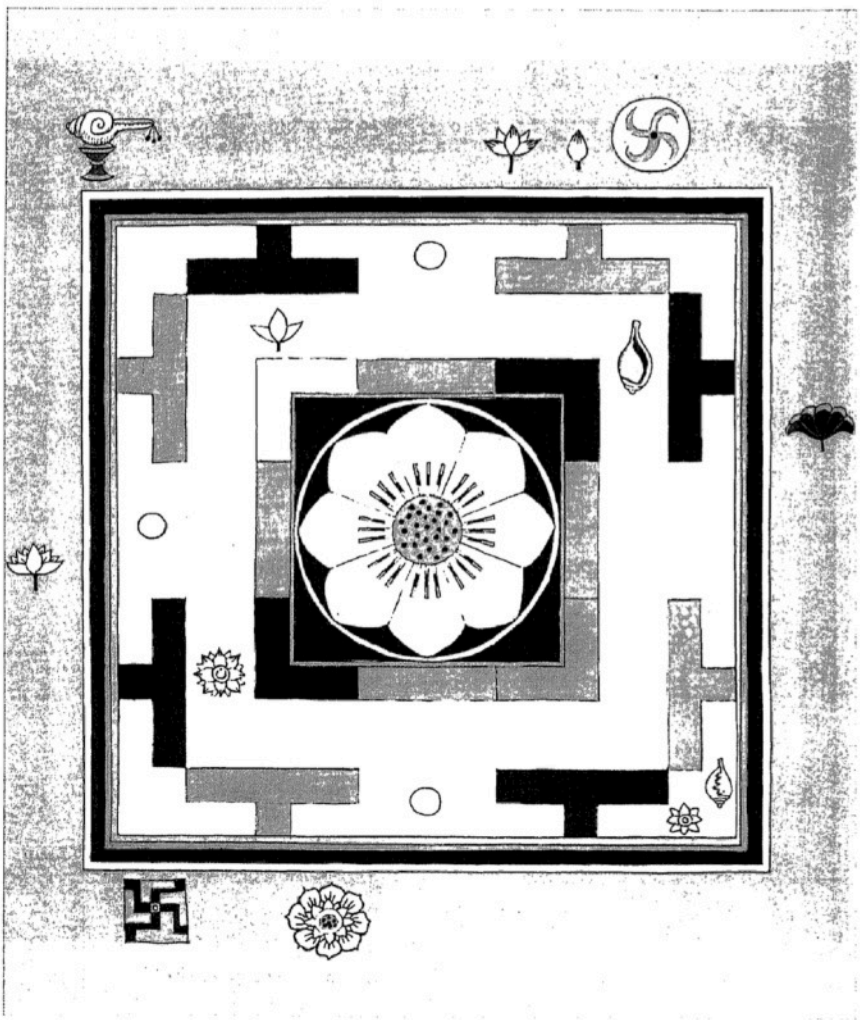
13. A vessel of plenty placed on a *sarvatobhadra*



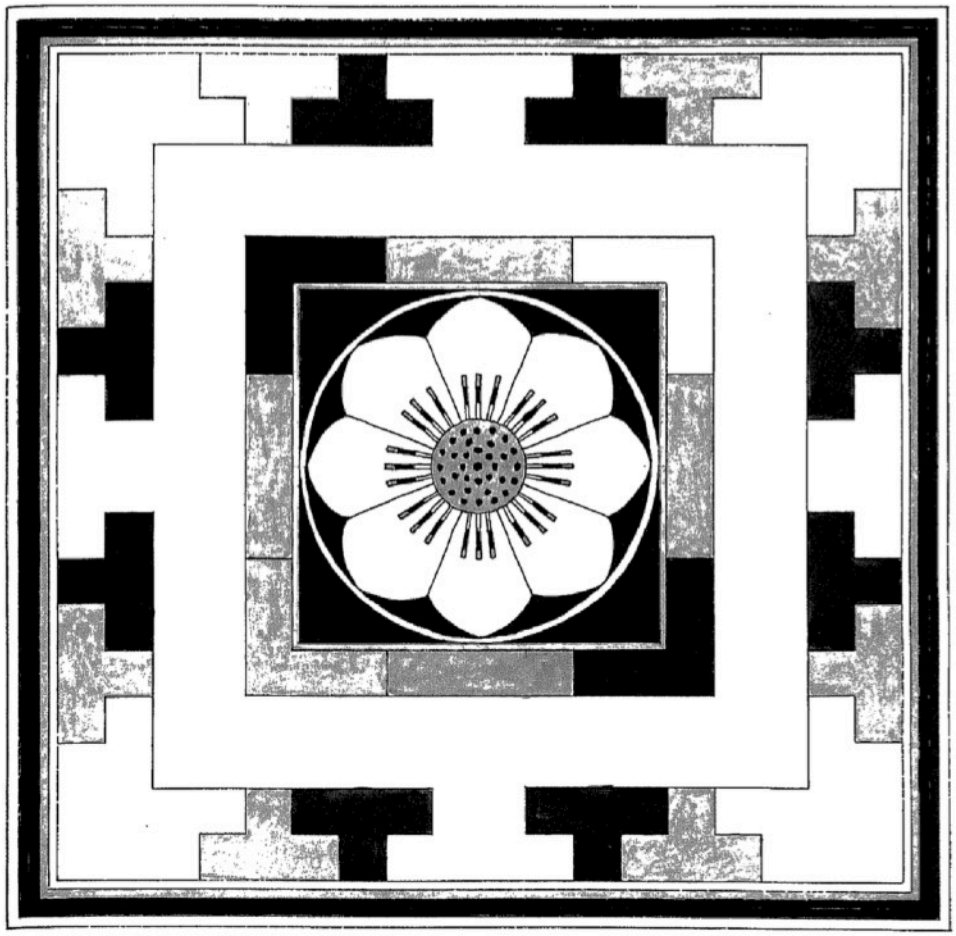
14. The *cakrābjamaṇḍala* according to the Pādma-Saṃhitā



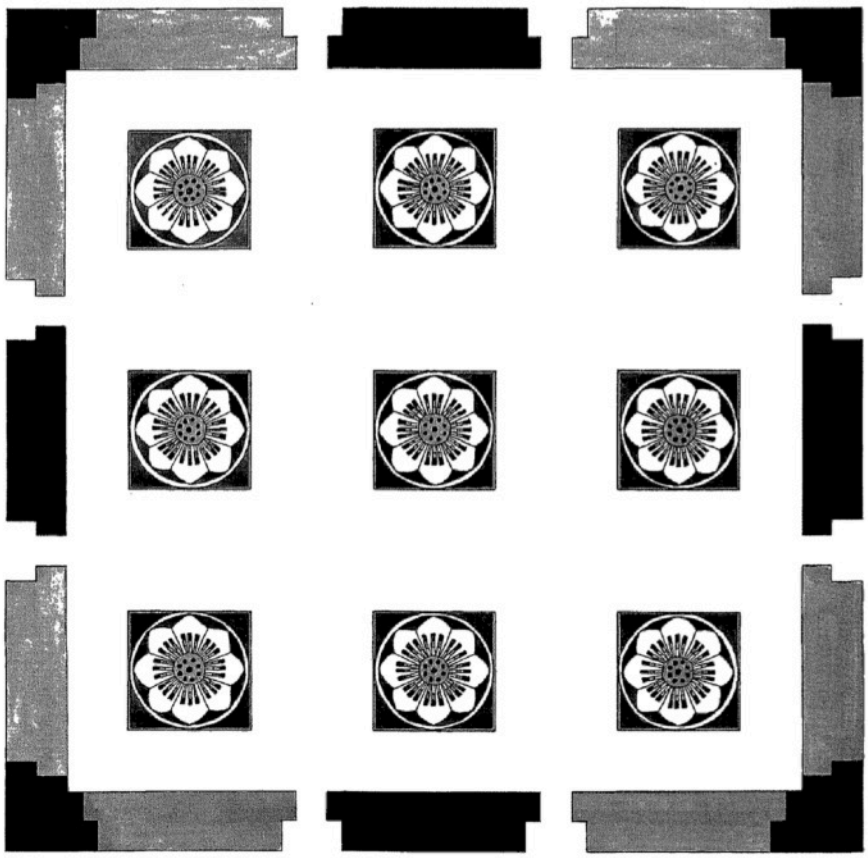
15. The *navapadmamaṇḍala* according to the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā



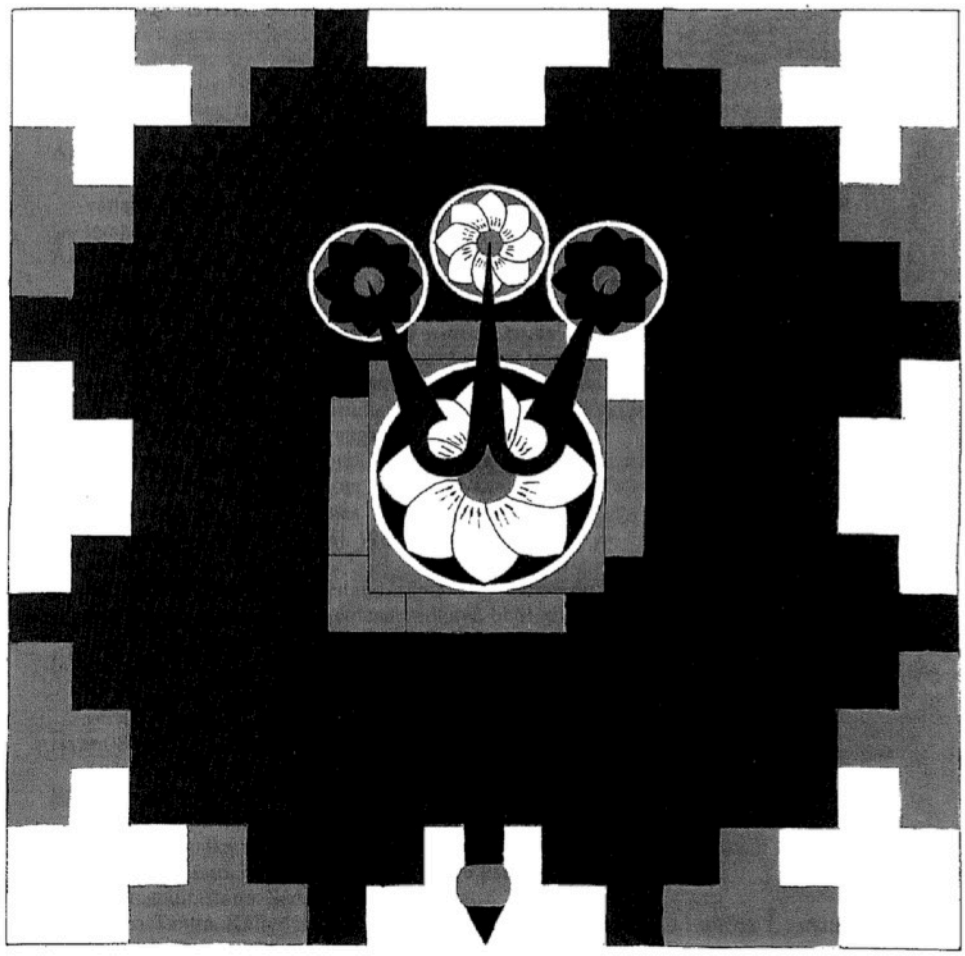
16. The *śrīmaṇḍala* of the Netratantra following Kṣemarāja's commentary



17. An alternative structure of the *śrīmaṇḍala* of the Netratantra



18. The maṇḍala of the nine lotuses (*navanābhamaṇḍala*) according to the Svacchandatantra and Kṣemarāja's commentary



19. A tentative reconstruction of the trident maṇḍala of the Siddhayogeśvarīmata (long recension) according to the Tantrāloka

Tantra Illuminated – Christopher Wallis
Stage IV-V: THE BRIDGE: Internal Alchemy, Chi & Lightbody

🧩 Summary:

Tantra Illuminated is one of the most complete modern introductions to Kashmir Shaivism — a non-dual Tantric system focused on consciousness as divine, spiritual embodiment, and awakening through the senses and breath. Wallis offers an accessible yet deeply profound look at the spiritual anatomy, ritual mechanics, and metaphysical architecture of the Tantric path — not as belief, but as direct experience.

🕉️ Core Teachings:

1. Consciousness is Shiva

Everything arises from and is made of pure awareness (Śiva)

There is no split between spirit and matter — all is divine play (lila)

Liberation isn't escape, but recognition of one's true nature as that awareness

2. The 36 Tattvas

A map of reality from pure consciousness to matter

Mirrors Kabbalistic Tree of Life and Emanationist models

Understanding tattvas = navigating between spirit realms and material illusions

3. Kundalini & Subtle Body

Uses chakras, nadis, bindus, and energy flows for awakening

Energy rises not violently but gracefully, unfolding stages of Shakti activation

Breathwork, mantra, visualization = keys to unifying body and awareness

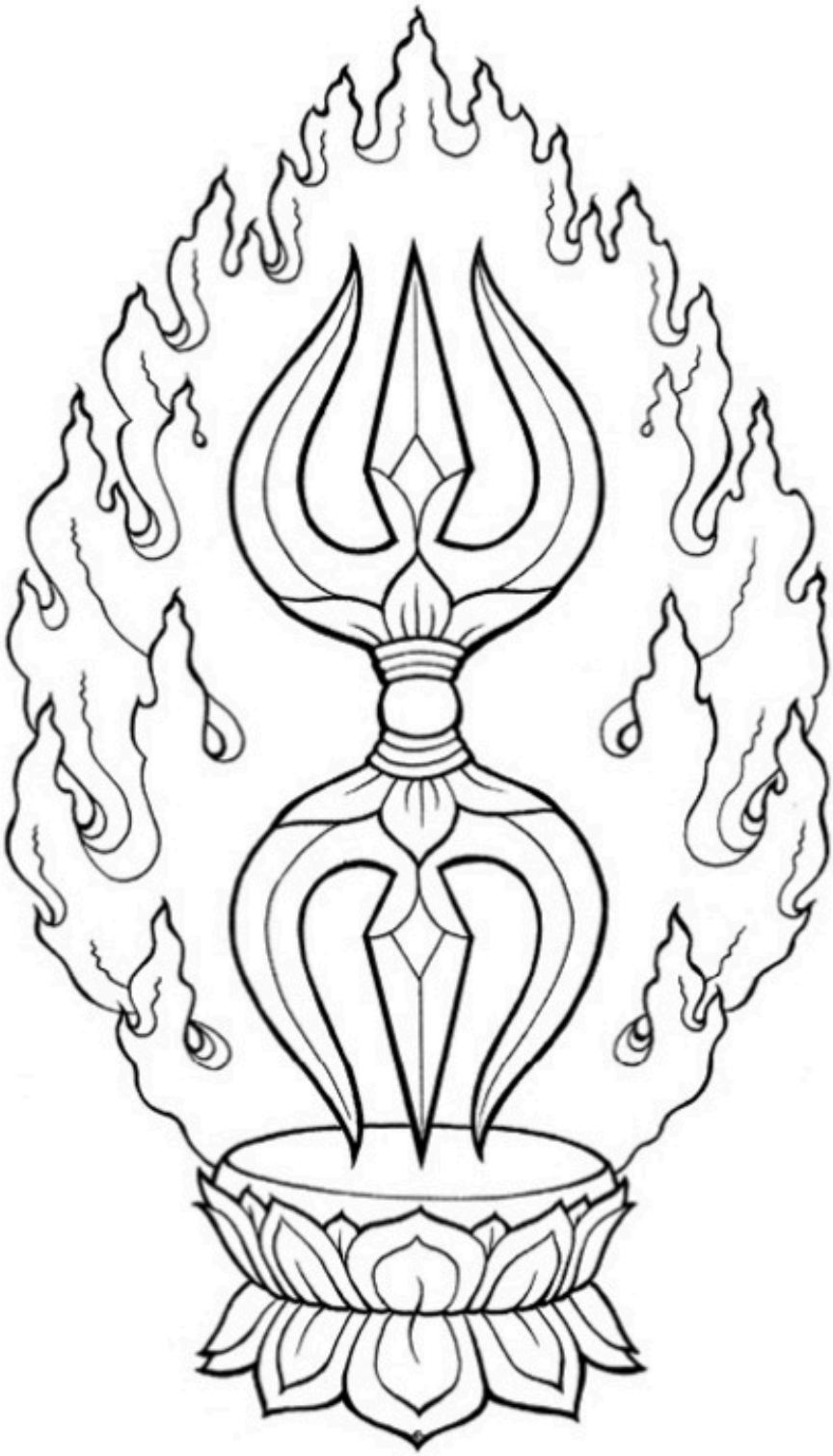
4. Ritual and Mantra

Ritual is not to summon or control — it is to reveal the ever-present sacred

Mantras are sonic expressions of consciousness

Deities are archetypes of your own divine Self, not external beings

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:
Consciousness-as-Code Framework
➤ Reframes the OS not as layered machinery but as living awareness architecture
Lightbody Embodiment Protocol
➤ Supports Golden Flower, Taoist Yoga, and Notoria systems of subtle evolution
Tattva Grid
➤ Spiritual physics engine: reality from Source → Matter
Divine Recognition Switch
➤ Can be activated through dream tech, soul retrieval, or planetary magick rituals to recenter sovereignty
✨ Unique Contributions:
Offers a non-dual core to unify all ritual systems
Reframes “God” as you, awake — not as a distant being
Connects Tantra with solomonic systems, gnostic memory, and dream/light rituals
🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:
“You are not the seeker of the Divine — you are the Divine, seeking to remember Itself.”
No screenshots required — unless you want to build a tattva-tree diagram, subtle body interface, or divine awareness map.



My definition of nondual Śaiva Tantra is

A spiritual movement originating in northern India that reached its peak in the 9th to 12th centuries, primarily characterized by

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1. Emphasis on direct experience of a divine reality that has transcendent and immanent aspects, called *Śiva* and *Śakti* respectively, with Śiva primarily understood as the pure consciousness that is ultimate ground of being and Śakti as the flowing energy making up the entire manifest universe.

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2. Initiation into a guru-disciple relationship and an egalitarian *kula* (spiritual community).

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3. Spiritual practice in four aspects: contemplation of View teachings, meditative ritual, yogic techniques of the subtle body, and the aesthetic cultivation of the senses, all aimed at accessing and assimilating the divine energy in all things, in

order to achieve both worldly success and spiritual liberation.[30]

The names of the nondual Divine (= Śiva-Śakti in perfect fusion)

the Heart (*hṛdaya*)
the Essence (*sāra*)
Vibration (*spanda*)
Absolute Potential (*visarga*)
the Bliss of Awareness (*cidānanda*)
the All-Pervasive (*vibhava*)
the Totality (*kula*)
Intimate Fusion (*saṅghaṭṭa*)
Vision (*dṛk*)
Potency (*sāmarthya*)
Experience (*bhoga*)
the Fierce One (*caṇḍī*)
the Supreme Power (*parā śakti*)
the Devourer of Time (*kālakarṣiṇī*)
the Word (*vāk*)
the Wave (*ūrmi*)
the Eternal (*nityā*)
the Nameless (*anākhya*)

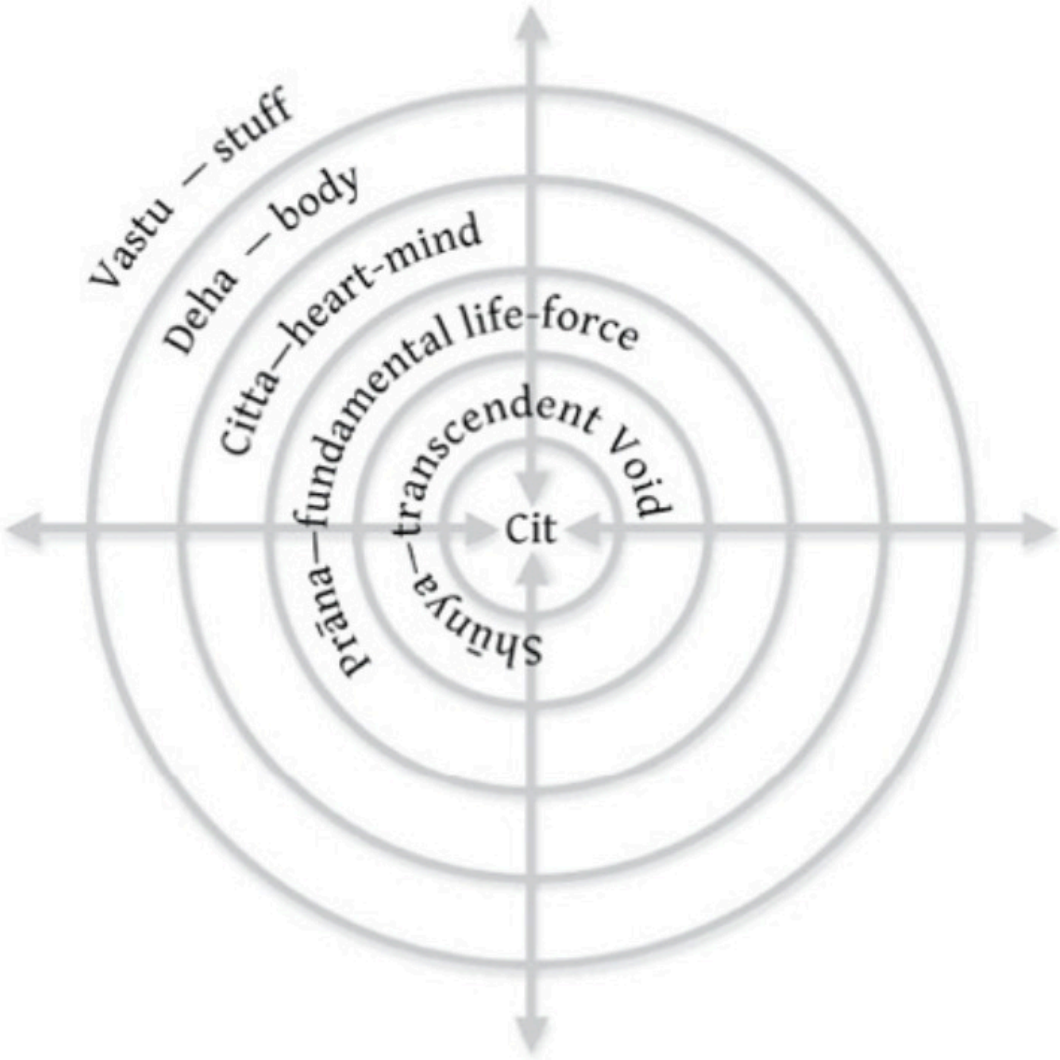
ONTOLOGY – What is the fundamental nature of reality? What is "being"? What can we say about existence?

EPISTEMOLOGY – How do we know anything? What are the valid means of knowledge? How can we test what we think we know?

TELEOLOGY – Is there a specific purpose to existence? Is it evolving toward an end point? Are things progressing?

PHENOMENOLOGY – What is the nature of conscious experience? Does the content and quality of our moment-to-moment experiences give us any access to enduring truth(s)?

THEODICY – If there is a God, how do we explain suffering? What is the purpose of evil? How can evil and suffering exist if the all-pervasive Divine is fundamentally good?



- the physical body,
- the heart-mind/energy body,
- the *prāṇa* or life-force,
- the transcendent Void, and

- **SṚṢṬI**—creation, emission, the flowing forth of Self-expression
- **STHITI**—stasis, maintenance, preservation
- **SAṂHĀRA**—dissolution, resorption, retraction
- **TIRODHĀNA**—concealment, occlusion, forgetting
- **ANUGRAHA**—revealing, remembering, grace

The 36 Tattvas of Tantrik Cosmology

The Heart: Śiva-Śakti in perfect fusion

The Absolute Tattvas
The Universal - Ultimate Reality

1. Śiva
Transcendent
Light of Consciousness

2. Śakti
Power of reflective
self-awareness

I AM

3. Sadāśiva: Icchā - Willing - I am this
4. Īśvara: Jñāna - Knowing - I am this; this am I
5. Śuddha-vidyā: Kriyā - Acting - This am I

6. Māyā

Psychical Tattvas
The 5 Cloaks (Kañchuka)

7. Kalā: Limited agency
8. Vidyā: Limited knowledge
9. Rāga: Desire/craving
10. Kāla: Sequential time
11. Niyati: Casuality and localization

12. Puruṣa
Individual Consciousness

13. Prakṛti
Primordial Nature

Physical Tattvas
The Relative World

14. Buddhi - intelligence
15. Ahaṅkāra- "I"-maker
16. Manas - attention and sense processing

Jñānendriyas	Karmendriyas	Tanmātras	Mahā-bhūtas
17. Ears	22. Mouth/speaking	27. Sound	32. Space
18. Skin	23. Hands/grasping	28. Touch	33. Wind
19. Eyes	24. Feet/ambulating	29. Appearance	34. Fire
20. Tongue	25. Genitals/procreating	30. Flavor	35. Water
21. Nose	26. Bowels/eliminating	31. Odor	36. Earth

Patañjali among others) articulated a system of twenty-five *tattva*s; when Śaiva Tantra took over and reworked the Sānkhya system, it added eleven more levels of reality on top, which it claimed the Sānkhyas had failed to discover.

It's difficult to define *tattva*; the Sanskrit word literally means "that-ness." We often translate it as "principle of reality." Abhinava Gupta offers a technical definition that is only helpful if you can understand it: "A *tattva* is that which, by virtue of its reality, enables conscious agents to subsume the categories within it." It's easier to understand the concept if you familiarize yourself with the specific *tattva*s themselves.

The *tattva*s can be enumerated from the bottom up or the top down. The top down order (Śiva -> Earth) is the order of creation (*sṛṣṭi-krama*). The bottom up is the order of liberation or return to Source (*saṃhāra-krama*). We'll examine them in the latter sequence, i.e., from the bottom up.

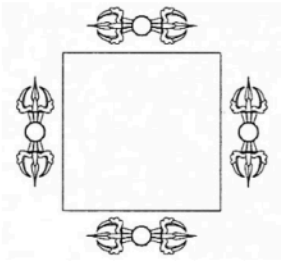
The first five *tattva*s are the five great elements of materiality, or *pañca mahā-bhūta*s. Each is accompanied by its traditional Tantrik symbol, used in visualization exercises.

TATTVA #36: EARTH (*prthvī*)

Earth, at the bottom of the *tattva* hierarchy, is not seen by the Tāntrikas as the "lowest" of the principles, but rather the most complete: that level of reality in which all the *tattva*s are fully manifest. In other words, at the top of the *tattva* hierarchy (Śiva-*tattva*) all the principles are present in potential form, while at the bottom all those potentialities inherent in the Divine are fully expressed.

Earth element is the principle of solidity, density, resistance, and groundedness. The exoteric *bīja* mantra (seed-syllable) commonly used to evoke and activate it is *lam*.[41] All five senses are engaged in perceiving

it.

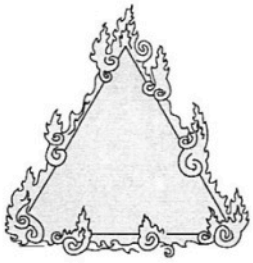


TATTVA #35: WATER (*āp or āpaḥ*)

Water is the principle of liquidity. The senses of hearing, touch, sight, and taste are engaged in perceiving it, especially the latter. The *bīja* mantra commonly used for it is *vam*.

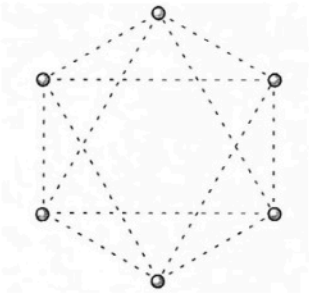
TATTVA #34: FIRE (*tejas*)

Fire is the principle of combustion and transformation. (Āyurveda speaks of the "digestive fire" as a way of describing the process by which the digestive system transforms food into energy.) The senses of hearing, touch, and sight are engaged in perceiving it, especially the latter. The *bīja* mantra commonly used for it is *ram.*



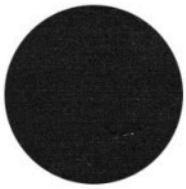
TATTVA #33: WIND (*vāyu*)

Wind is the principle of mobility (note that "air" and "wind" are the same word in Sanskrit, and the latter would be the more accurate translation). The primary characteristic of air is the way it moves to fill a partial vacuum, constantly seeking to even itself out. The senses of hearing and touch are engaged in perceiving it, especially the latter. The *bīja* mantra commonly used for it is *yam.*



TATTVA #32: SPACE (*ākāśa*)

Space is the principle of vacuity and of extension (three-dimensionality), sometimes mistranslated as "ether" (a concept of the interstellar medium that was debunked around a hundred years ago). Space provides the context for the manifestation of all matter/energy. The sense of hearing is engaged in perceiving it, in the sense that sound resonates through space. The *bīja* mantra commonly used for it is *ham.*



The next five *tattva*s are the *tanmātra*s or so-called "subtle elements," that is to say, the properties of things that make them perceptible by our senses. Sentient beings live in worlds that are smellable, tastable, visible, tangible, and audible. By virtue of these qualities, they developed senses corresponding to them (see below).

TATTVA #31: ODOR (*gandha*)
TATTVA #30: FLAVOR (*rasa*)
TATTVA #29: APPEARANCE (or form; *rūpa*)
TATTVA #28: TACTILITY (*sparśa*)
TATTVA #27: SOUND VIBRATION (*śabda*)

The next five are the five "action capacities"or *karmendriya*s. These are the five fundamental functions of a human being in relation to his or her environment.

TATTVA #26: EVACUATION (bowels)
TATTVA #25: REPRODUCTION (genitals)
TATTVA #24: LOCOMOTION (feet)
TATTVA #23: MANIPULATION (hand)
TATTVA #22: SPEECH (mouth)

The next five are the "sense capacities" or *jñānendriya*s. They are the internal correlates of the five "subtle elements" above, the sensory energies that have evolved in conformity with the manifold sensibility of reality. Since all that really exists is a single field of energy, the senses (even touch) are essentially frequency analyzers that translate

vibrations into the apparently tangible and static realities perceived by our brain, such as the visual appearance and sound of something.

TATTVA #21: SMELLING (*ghrāṇa*)
TATTVA #20: TASTING (*rasana*)
TATTVA #19: SEEING (*cakṣus*)
TATTVA #18: TOUCHING (*tvak*, lit. "skin")
TATTVA #17: HEARING "*śrotra*"

The four sets of five that constitute the twenty lower *tattva*s may be aligned this way, bringing out their correspondences more clearly:

Dense Elements	**Subtle Elements**	**Perceptive Energies**	**Active Energies**
Earth	Odor	Smelling	Evacuation
Water	Flavor	Tasting	Pleasure/Reproduction
Fire	Appearance	Seeing	Locomotion
Wind	Touch	Feeling	Manipulating
Space	Sound	Hearing	Speech

These alignments may seem common sense, but in fact a correct and complete meeting between the energies of senses and their respective sense objects such as the Tāntrikas seek is more rare than it seems. That is, most of us live in a mental world of our own making to such an extent that we are not well grounded in the sensual world. When we do pay

attention to it, it is "through a glass, darkly," filtering it through that mentally constructed world. This is why the Tantra stresses sensual meditations—meditative savoring of food and music, as well as slowed down and ritualized acts of refined awareness like the Japanese tea ceremony—that allow us to cultivate our ability to allow the senses to meet their objects fully. In NŚT, this is called "feeding the goddesses of the senses." When fed properly, the "goddesses" reward you by suffusing your awareness with aesthetic rapture, increasing your capacity to experience beauty. The whole world becomes more vivid and real, more radiantly lovely, more full of life-energy, not the relatively dull and lifeless world perceived by one living in their own mental world, or the insubstantial shadow world perceived by a transcendentalist meditator (one who takes the transcendent realm of the void as "the Real"). The latter are the worlds of one who starves the goddesses of the senses.

Now we move into the higher and subtler *tattva*s. The next three are the aspects of what in the West we generally call "the mind." The Sanskrit collective term for these faculties is *antaḥ-karaṇa*, or "inner instrument."

TATTVA #16: MIND (*manas*, faculty of attention and sense processing)

The *manas* is the common functional mind, processing and synthesizing the data collected by the senses. It is also the faculty of attention, and thus it is the *manas* that needs to be gently trained and lovingly disciplined when learning to meditate.

TATTVA #15: EGO (*ahaṅkāra*, lit. "identity-constructor")

The *ahaṅkāra* is the part of mind that identifies what is "me" and

"mine." It appropriates certain things and experiences, assimilating them into its constructed sense of identity. Simply put, it is what you think you are. So, it is the ego that declares, "I am fat," "I am thin," "I am clever," "I am stupid," "I am independent," "I am a victim," and every other "I" statement (*ego* literally means "I am" in Latin). The aggregation of all these thoughts constitutes the egoic identity. The egoic identity is a fictitious construct, consisting primarily of self-images that persist because they are believed and attached to. Each such self-image is based in a particular moment or moments of past experience that generated a mental construct (a "story") that was taken as a static reality. Thus the ego is essentially a fiction, because all that really exists is the flux of phenomena in each present moment. But it seems real because you believe in it, and belief shapes experience. Ego, then, is *a persistent contraction of awareness in the form of a collection of self-images that causes suffering through artificial self-limitation*. Since it is part of the inherent dynamism of consciousness to pulsate continually through cycles of expansion and contraction, whenever we get "stuck" in one or the other, we lose alignment and experience suffering. The ego should be a fluid entity but instead becomes a static prison.

Many spiritual traditions view the ego as an enemy on the spiritual path because its voice seems opposite to the voice of God, our innermost Self. However, in the Tantrik tradition, an enemy is simply an ally viewed in the wrong way. Thus the ego is not to be annihilated in Tantrik yoga but rather purified and infinitely expanded. Since the ego simply means "what you think you are," expanding it means expanding your sense of self, including more and more in your self-definition. Ultimately, when the ego expands infinitely, you experience all things in yourself and yourself in all things. There are no more boundaries to selfhood. When you experience all beings as part of yourself, you naturally act with compassion and wisdom. This is the state of *pūrṇo'ham*

vimarśa, which can be translated several ways: "the perfect 'I'-consciousness," or "the awareness 'I am full and complete'"or "the awareness 'the real I encompasses everything'." It is the state of complete all-inclusive expansion. Just as the mass of any object accelerated to the speed of light increases to infinity, in the same way when the ego reaches the state of complete expansion, it merges into the ocean of Consciousness.

TATTVA #14: DISCERNING FACULTY *(buddhi)*

This is the most important mental faculty for all schools of yoga philosophy. It is a key term in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*. The *buddhi* is the faculty of reason by which we formulate conceptions and make decisions. It is the power of imagination. It is, most importantly for yogīs, the faculty of discernment, by which we decide what is beneficial for us and what is not. Abhinava argues that discernment (*tarka*) is the highest of all the practices of yoga, and the only one that directly leads to liberation. The most important form of discernment on the spiritual path, he tells us, is discerning between what is to be held close (*upādeya*) and what is to be laid aside (*heya*)—that is, what is ultimately beneficial for us and what is not.

And there's the rub: what guarantee do we have that the *buddhi* is accurate in its discernment? In fact, we have ample evidence of its inaccuracy, for many times we choose what we think is beneficial, and it turns out not to be so. Of course, this is not as huge a problem as it seems because on the path of Tantrik yoga most "mistakes" become advantages when regarded as growth opportunities. But since the learning from some mistakes is harder and more time-consuming than necessary, we wish to constantly refine and improve our ability to choose what is beneficial, and thereby increase our efficiency of movement on the path. Why does that seem so difficult?

In yoga philosophy, the *buddhi* is impaired in its function by the

presence of what are called *saṃskāra*s, or the subliminal impressions of past experiences. In common Sanskrit usage, a *saṃskāra* is literally an impression, like a footprint in the sand at the beach. Now, if there is a series of deep footprints and other impressions in the sand, when the tide comes in and the water flows over them, it will flow differently than if the sand were perfectly smooth. In precisely the same way, when the energy of reality flows through your mind, it is affected by the deep impressions of past experiences that are lodged there, and thereby it flows differently. Thus based on our experience of the past, we formulate projections and make assumptions that too often are misaligned with the reality of the present. Our brains are good at pattern matching—perhaps too good, for even a superficial resemblance of the current situation to a past situation will cause us to unconsciously assume that the present is like the past in most or all of its details. This act of unconsciously projecting the past onto the present is the primary reason we are unable to be aware of the reality of the current situation as it is and, thereby, make good choices.

The spiritual path is very much about developing clear vision, about cultivating the ability to see things as they really are. In classical yoga philosophy, the practices of yoga (especially meditation) have the primary purpose of dissolving the *saṃskāra*s in order to bring about this clear vision, and the clear discernment that results from it. The analogy that is often given is that of polishing a dirty mirror. When, through yoga, the mirror of the *buddhi* becomes clear, it can perfectly reflect the light of the divine Self. Thus, the more we practice yoga, the more accurate our intuition and discernment become. Sometimes people think great yoga masters can read minds or have other psychic abilities. In fact, they just see without obstruction, something so rare in our world that it seems like a magical power. And indeed, knowledge *is* power—the only kind that cannot be taken away. A master with a purified *buddhi*

can always see the most beneficial course of action in any given situation, giving him or her a great power to change situations and uplift human beings.

Finally, we should note that in Tantrik philosophy, the *buddhi* is not localized in the brain but extends throughout the body. Thus *saṃskāra*s of different kinds are distributed throughout the body and can be released by the physical as well as the mental practices of yoga. We experience the *buddhi* on different levels of the body; for example, when we speak of "gut instinct," we refer to an aspect of the *buddhi*'s intentionality associated with very deep, unconscious *saṃskāra*s, subjectively associated with the viscera. However, without the practice of yoga, the gut instinct in which we place so much trust might lead us badly astray.

TATTVA #13: SECONDARY MATERIALITY (*prakṛti*)

Prakṛti, sometimes translated as "nature," sometimes as "materiality," really refers to the entire physical universe of matter/energy. (Matter and energy were recognized as aspects of each other by the early Indian philosophers, whereas in the West the discovery is still so recent (Einstein, 1905) that we don't have a single word for matter/energy as Sanskrit does: *prakṛti.*) In the human microcosm, *prakṛti* refers to the body/mind field. Just as matter and energy are aspects of each other, the body and mind are not separate, but on a continuum: the mind is the subtlest aspect of body and the body the most tangible manifestation of the mind. This is why dis-ease in the mind affects the body, and vice versa.

Prakṛti can also refer to the unmanifest field of primordial materiality at the beginning of the universe, out of which all the lower *tattva*s are created. In this form, *prakṛti* consists of perfect balance of the three

*guṇa*s or qualities of nature: *sattva,* lucidity and lightness; *rajas,* energy and passion; and *tamas,* darkness, heaviness, and inertia. These three *guṇas* recombine in various proportions to create *tattva*s 14–36 (above). The field of *prakṛti*, then, is everything that can become an object of consciousness; i.e., everything except the following *tattva*s (1–12 below). However, note that in the Tantra, *Prakṛti* is defined as "secondary materiality" because there is a higher principle, Māyā, which is the primary source of the universe (see *tattva #6* below).

TATTVA #12: INDIVIDUAL "SOUL" (*puruṣa*, the knowing subject, the Self, the witness, pure consciousness, the embodied knower of the field; = *ātman, jīva, kṣetrajña*)

The *puruṣa* sits at the top of the hierarchy of *tattva*s in the system of Sānkhya and the classical yoga of Patañjali. For those non-Tantrik systems, it is the ultimate principle, a transcendent reality: spirit as *opposed* to matter/energy. They propose that there are a plurality of divine Souls (each sentient being having his own), that are not part of one overarching conscious entity. For Tantrik philosophy, it naturally follows, the *puruṣa* is not the highest principle for it does not express an all-encompassing View. Rather, *puruṣa* is correctly understood as contracted form of the universal Consciousness. It is individuated consciousness, defined as Śiva veiled by five types of limitation (see below). In some systems of Indian philosophy, the individual soul is a permanent entity, but in Tantrik Shaivism it is a phase of contraction, and every contraction gives way to expansion—in this case, the expansion back into the absolute fullness of unlimited divine Awareness. So, the individual soul is not permanent: though it may last for thousands of lifetimes, it is still a wave on the ocean of being. But how

does Śiva, the absolute Consciousness, manifest itself in the form of an individual like you? By concealing its fullness with five "veils."

THE FIVE SHELLS OR VEILS (*kañcukas*)

Though we have been proceeding from the bottom up, it doesn't make sense to discuss the *kañcukas* that way, so we will proceed to *tattvas* 7 through 11, then move on to 6. The five *kañcukas* unfold directly from Māyā (*tattva* #6). They are usually discussed as the veils that contract Śiva's self-awareness into that of the limited individual (*jīva*). However, in the original Tantrik tradition, the understanding is this: Prior to manifesting himself as a limited individual, fully expanded Śiva first contracts himself down to a single point of absolute limitation, shedding his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence completely. Then, in order to manifest as an embodied sentient being, he equips himself with five limited capacities. These are the *kañcukas*, and the term literally means "shell" or "armor," for these are the capacities necessary for experience and action in the world of duality. However, it is true that *kañcuka* can also mean "covering," and the most common way of presenting the *kañcukas* is as the coverings that conceal the fullness of divine reality. Thus we can say that Śiva + *kañcukas* = *jīva* ("individual soul").[42] (Note that when I say "Śiva" above, I really mean "Śiva-Śakti," but the problem with pronouns makes it easier to talk about Śiva.) Let us now explore these five *kañcukas*.

TATTVA #7: LIMITED POWER OF ACTION (*kalā*)

This is the fundamental *kañcuka;* the others all follow from God's self-imposed limitation on his power of action, his omnipotence. Note that

kalā does not mean "powerlessness" but rather "limited power." *Kalā* is in fact that principle which animates the individual soul's capacities to a greater or lesser degree. Each of the five *kañcuka*s, far from being a negative force, is the limited form of a divine Power. We seek to cultivate them, expanding them through spiritual practice. Thus *kalā* in its fully expanded form is simply the omnipotent *kriyā-śakti* or the Power of divine Action. Note that *kalā* also means a sliver of the moon, i.e., the amount that the moon grows in a single day. On the spiritual path, we are waxing from a mere sliver of divine power toward the total fullness of our capacity to express our innate divinity.

TATTVA #8: LIMITED POWER OF KNOWLEDGE (*vidyā*)

The second veil is not ignorance but incomplete knowledge. The problem of this *kañcuka* is not that we know nothing but that we know a little bit and think that that is all there is to know. The "shell" (*kañcuka*) of *vidyā* protects us by allowing us to understand something about our world. But when we believe that we know what life is like, that we have an understanding that is complete except in the trivial details, when in fact we are seeing only a small fragment of the true reality, we disallow the possibility of divine illumination. As I once read, "When a man looks at the horizon of his own knowledge and believes he sees the horizon of knowledge itself, then he is truly lost." Yet, this very limited knowledge that binds us to a contracted experience of what reality is, is itself simply a limited form of the divine Power of Knowing or *jñāna-śakti.* Thus, it is usually not the case that what we know about life is wrong but rather that it needs to be situated in a larger context, integrated into a more all-encompassing vision. On the spiritual path we seek to ever

expand our understanding; this may be why Abhinava Gupta calls this same power *unmeṣa-śakti,* the Power of Unfolding. This unfolding is fueled by our intention and our practice of self-aware reflection, supported by the contemplation of the scriptures and the words of our teachers. But in the expansion of our limited power of knowledge, we of course seek to move beyond words to an inner knowing, an embodied experiential knowledge that the word-based understanding of the intellect can only approximate.

TATTVA #9: DESIRE (*rāga*)

When the fully expanded Consciousness contracts into the form of an individual, it experiences itself as incomplete or imperfect and therefore desires whatever it thinks it needs for completion. This desire is called *rāga,* most accurately translated as "the nonspecific craving for worldly experience."[43] It is nonspecific in the sense that it is a craving for *something* not quite known that gets rationalized as a specific desire based on each individual's life experience, e.g., love, sex, admiration, money, power. But in fact all craving is truly craving for only one thing: the fullness of divine Consciousness. Therefore, when any other desire gets fulfilled, it is found to be unsatisfactory; the craving still remains.

The literal meaning of the word *rāga* is "color," for like dye these desires saturate and even stain the mind, influencing how we see things and people. In the Tantra, however, desire is not a problem but an opportunity, an opportunity to follow that desire back to the source and realize that what we really crave is fullness, wholeness—that we will be satisfied by nothing less than knowing (and being) God. Thus we come to understand that *rāga* is the limited form of the divine *icchā-śakti* or the Power of Will, the deep impulse to express the fullness of our authentic

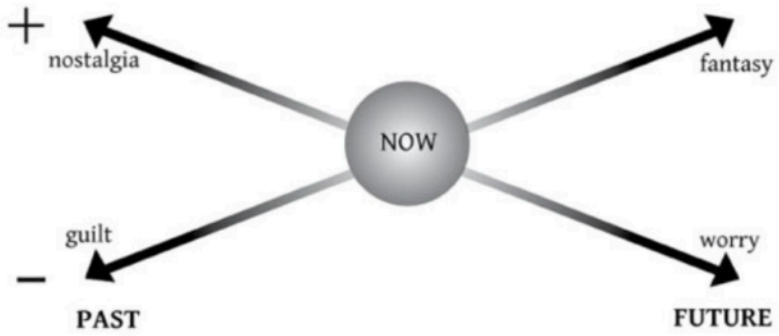
being. From this perspective, desire teaches us about those areas of life in which we may need to expand and express ourselves more fully or authentically. We can choose to activate our *icchā-śakti* in those areas, flowing forth our intentionality from a place of fullness, not of lack. But as long as you are ignorant of the true nature of desire, as long as you believe that possessing something outside of yourself (whether tangible or intangible) will somehow permanently or completely fulfill you, you will continue to experience an insatiable void, an emptiness that cannot be filled, and an inexplicable angst that will burden you until the last day of your life. It is primarily this *rāga,* our craving for more, that propels us into another birth and another round of suffering. But again, *rāga* should not be rejected but transmuted. In the mythological tales, even Lord Śiva had an addiction to gambling and wine, a craving that he transformed into an addiction to "shattering the fear of all beings in all worlds" (*Siva-mahimnaḥ Stotram*). The first step in such transmutation is tracing desire back to its source and realizing your longing for divine fullness, letting that longing soften your heart and compel you to seek true connection to the One.

TATTVA #10: TIME (*kāla*)[44]

The fourth of the prerequisites for embodied experience is Time. Instead of the timeless simultaneity of absolute Consciousness, for which the entire universe is a single complex creation including all times, embodied beings generally experience time at the slow crawl of one second per second. This also means that we experience time sequentially, with one thing following another in a process of continual change (though some sources tell us that change is mere appearance and what really happens is that the Goddess Kālī devours the whole universe each instant and then recreates it anew in a slightly different form, hundreds of times each second).

We are often burdened by our awareness of past and future—endless

regrets and hopeful expectations, worry and anxiety—yet it is because of that very awareness that we can grow. As the great German philosopher Martin Heidegger says, we are beings who always have our past with us and are always growing toward our future. That is what makes us different from other animals. So, as usual in Tantrik philosophy, the very thing that causes us suffering is also the means of our fulfillment once we shift our attitude toward it and our understanding of it. We do not seek to be entirely in the present moment the way animals are, with no conscious awareness of past and future. Rather, we seek to be centered in the present moment, aware of our past behind us and our future ahead of us *while being free of the four modes of escaping the experience of the now*—guilt/regret, nostalgic reverie, fantasy, and anxiety. This is to transcend time even while being in time.



When you look at the chart, if you're like most people, you'll acknowledge the stress and dis-ease caused by guilt and worry but think there is nothing wrong with nostalgia and fantasy. Yoga psychology challenges this notion, telling us that losing ourselves in fantasy is as detrimental to us as being obsessed by worry because fantasizing is equally effective in removing us from full awareness of the present. The present is what is real, and it is what we are called to respond to. In fact, the only way your hopes for the future can ever become a reality in the present is by careful attention to the details of present-moment reality. A more accurate perspective would be to accept that there is no future *per se* but only a constantly flowing present, which, through close and

reverent attention, reveals its divinity ever more to the yogī. In this way we can learn to experience ourselves as a whole being, with our past and future part of our *present*, without grasping toward either. In this way we can become free of the net of Time, entering into eternally flowing simultaneity (*nityodita*).

TATTVA #11: CAUSALITY (*niyati*)

Niyati is the force that binds us to our karmas; it is the law of cause and effect that ensures we shall reap as we have sown. Because of *niyati,* you are certain to experience the results of your own karmic actions, not anyone else's. A karmic action is a morally charged action motivated by a desire to attain or avoid a particular result. When we learn to perform actions as service or sacrifice, investing in the process but unattached to the final outcome, those actions have no karmic charge and therefore do not bind us, whatever the result may be. Thus the liberated being is no longer bound by *niyati,* fate, and is free from karma, though he or she may still undergo the fruits of karmas accrued before liberation.

Niyati is also associated with specific place (*deśa*), because it is your unique set of karmas that determines your location. That is, because of your karmas, you are born on the Earth, living where you do and not in another city, country, or planet. Thus the inverse of *niyati,* or rather its full expansion, is all-pervasiveness or nonlocality.

TATTVA #6: MĀYĀ

Now we come to the top of the hierarchy of manifest reality, the highest principle that is not the Absolute itself. In other traditions, *māyā* means illusion or delusion, but not so in Tantra. Māyā is the "world-source" (*jagad-yoni*), the Divine's power to project itself into manifestation. It is also the power of differentiation by which the One appears as many. Māyā is not given a negative valuation in the Tantra,

even though it does in a sense delude us into seeing duality where there is only unity; for seeing dualistically is a necessary part of the process of Self-exploration that the Divine has freely chosen by manifesting a universe in the first place. Māyā is the power the Divine uses in the creative expression of its nature. The paradox of Māyā is that the power that creates the apparent differentiation that causes so much trouble is the very same power God that uses to glorify Himself. Māyā is the form of the Goddess that constitutes all manifest reality, blessing us with the opportunity for the more challenging—and therefore deeper—realization of *unity-in-diversity*. Look around you right now and see a flash of the truth: everything that is happening is Her play. Just as we form different ornaments out of pure gold and call them earrings, necklace, bracelet, anklet, and so on, in the same way all things of this universe are made of one substance, the energy-body of the Goddess, and differ from one another only in name, form, and function, not in essence.

THE PURE UNIVERSE (*śuddhādhvan*)

The so-called Pure Universe comprising the top five *tattva*s is not a place; it is the divine Reality that pervades the whole of the manifest universe. The top five *tattva*s are essentially a description of God/dess. Though divided into five levels, they are all aspects of the Divine and are referred to as phases of God's awareness. The differences between them are differences of perspective and emphasis. To reach any of the five *tattva*s of the Pure Universe is to attain complete liberation and awakening.

TATTVA #5: PURE MANTRA-WISDOM (*Śuddha-vidyā*)

The level of Pure Wisdom is also the level of mantra (besides meaning "wisdom," *vidyā* is also the feminine word for "mantra"). The wisdom spoken of here is not any type of intellectual knowledge but rather the various phases of Śiva-Śakti's self-awareness expressed in the form of the seventy million mantras—all the mantras that have ever existed or will ever exist. For the Tantrik tradition, mantras are actually conscious beings, analogous to angels in the Western religions. Someone who attains liberation on the level of *tattva* #5 becomes a mantra-being. We know that this doctrine, that mantras are conscious, was taken seriously because the texts tell us that if a guru grants initiation into the Tantra to someone who subsequently falls from the path, then that guru must perform a special ritual to apologize to the mantras for putting them to work needlessly.

It is absolutely crucial to understand that in this tradition a mantra, its deity, and its goal are all one and the same. Thus, for example, Lakṣmī's mantra *OṂ ŚRĪṂ MAHĀLAKṢMYAI NAMAḤ* ***is*** the Goddess Lakṣmī in sound form; it is her sonic body. Nor is her mantra something separate from the goal for which it is repeated, i.e., to cultivate abundance, for it is the very vibration of abundance (and, as well, the other qualities of Śrī: elegance, charm, grace, beauty, prosperity, and auspiciousness). So, all the various "deities" of Indian spirituality exist on the level of the *Śuddha-vidyā tattva* as phases of Śiva-Śakti's awareness, the many facets, if you will, of the One jewel. Further, there are countless mantra-beings on the *Śuddha-vidyā* level that do not correspond to known Indian deities; perhaps we can suppose that the deities of all spiritual traditions exist on this level, insofar as they can be understood as having sonic forms.

One who reaches liberation on this level sees the entire universe as a diverse array of energies, but with a single essence. She sees no static

matter, experiencing everything as interacting patterns of vibration. The wonder of that which she sees takes precedence over her I-sense, though there is unity between them: "I am *this!*" (*idam evāham*).

The divine Power that corresponds to this level is *kriyā-śakti,* the Power of Action. This is so because the primary characteristic of mantras is that they are agents of transformative change, i.e., of action.

TATTVA #4: THE LORD (*Īśvara*)

This is the level of the personal God, God as a being with specific qualities, that is, the Deity that can be named in various languages (whether the name be Kriṣhṇa, Allāh, Avalokiteśvara, YHWH, etc.) This is the level of reality that most monotheistic religions presume to be the highest. *Īśvara* is a generic, nonsectarian term for God (also found in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*).

This level is associated with *jñāna-śakti,* the Power of Knowing, for Īśvara holds within His being the knowledge of the subtle pattern that will be used in the creation of the universe. He empowers His regents on *tattva* #5 (who are really aspects of Himself) to stimulate the primordial homogenous world-source (Māyā, *tattva* #6) with this pattern, "churning" her so that she begins to produce the differentiation of the lower *tattva*s, starting with the contractions called the *kañcuka*s (#7 and below, see "the five shells").

At the level of Īśvara there is a balanced equality and identity between God and His incipient creation. The Sanskrit phrase said to express the experience of reality at this level is *aham idam idam aham,* or "I am This; This am I."[45] There is a fascinating and purely "coincidental" parallel here with the self-declaration of the God of the Hebrew Bible, who when asked for His name (at Exodus 3:14), replied simply, *ehyeh Asher ehyeh,* "I am That I am."

In Śaiva Tantra, it is not only God who exists at this level; so do any

beings who have reached that same awareness. Thus the difference between Īśvara and other beings abiding at *tattva* #4 is one of office, not of nature.

TATTVA #3: THE EVER-BENEVOLENT ONE (*Sadāśiva*)

The word "God" is no longer applicable here, for this level transcends any form of a Deity with identifiable names or attributes. This is the level on which only the slightest subtle differentiation has just begun to emerge between the absolute Deity and the idea of the universe, the universe that S/he will create out of Him/Herself. Thus, it is the level of *icchā-śakti,* the divine Will Power, the creative urge or primal impulse toward Self-expression. The Sanskrit phrase said to express the experience of reality at this level is *aham idam,* "I am this," or "This incipient totality is my own Self," where there is identity between the Divine and the embryonic universe held within it. The sense of "I" has clear priority, wholly enveloping the "this"; so all beings who attain unity-consciousness with emphasis on the "I" pole abide at this level.

The Sadāśiva-*tattva* is the first movement into differentiation, for at the level of *tattva*s #1 and 2, there is absolute nonduality. Abhinava Gupta tells us that the Divine at this level is called Sadāśiva, "eternally Śiva," to remind us that even as a universe begins to come into being through the power of the Will, the Absolute loses none of its divinity, it is "still Śiva," which of course also means "still blessed."

Historically, Sadāśiva is also the name of the high deity of one form of Śaiva Tantra, a form that was later surpassed by the worship of the conjoined and co-equal pair of Śiva-Śakti. He is also pictured as the form of Śiva that sprouts the five faces that speak the five streams of sacred scripture. Thus Sadāśiva is sometimes considered the first ray of divine compassion.

TATTVA #2: POWER / THE GODDESS (Śakti)

In the traditional *tattva* hierarchy, Śakti is #2, but in the nondual schools, care is taken to emphasize that Śiva and Śakti switch places, for they are two sides of the same coin. That is, neither Śiva nor Śakti has priority—it is a matter of which aspect is dominant in any given experience.

The word *śakti* literally means "power, potency, energy, capacity, capability." In NŚT, all powers are worshipped as goddesses, or rather as forms of *the* Goddess (*Mahādevī*). Śakti can no more be separated from Śiva than heat can be separated from fire. All forms of energy are Śakti, and since matter is energy (as the Tāntrikas well knew), the whole manifest universe is seen as the body of the Goddess, and the movements of all forms of energy are Her dance. The various aspects of Śakti are covered in detail above.

The term *śakti* is often used to specifically denote spiritual energy, or God's transformative power. In the scriptures, this meaning is often conveyed with the special term *rudra-śakti,* which refers to the primal, awe-inspiring divine Power that flows through us in spiritual experience. An infusion of this divine Power is called *rudra-śakti-samāveśa,* where *samāveśa* refers to the spiritual experience comprising an expansion of consciousness, a dissolution of the boundaries between self and other, a sharing of self-hood with God and/or with the whole universe, and often an blissful influx of energy.

TATTVA #1: THE BENEVOLENT ONE (Śiva)

In the context of NŚT, Śiva is not the name of a god. Rather, the word is understood to signify the peaceful, quiescent ground of all Reality, the infinite silence of transcendent Divinity, or, in the poet's phrase, the "still point at the center of the turning world." While Śakti is extroversive, immanent, manifest, omniform, and dynamic, Śiva is introversive, transcendent, unmanifest, formless, and still. Śiva is the absolute void of pure Consciousness. (To be more accurate,

Consciousness is never absolutely still, so on the level of the Śiva-*tattva*, there is what Abhinava calls *kiṃcit-calana,* an extraordinarily subtle movement, an imperceptible and exquisitely sweet undulation.)

The word *śiva* is traditionally interpreted as "that in which all things lie (*śī*)." Thus Śiva is the ground of being, that which gives reality its coherence. His nature is beyond any qualities and is, therefore, difficult to express in words, but in *Essence of the Tantras*, Śiva is described as the coherence and unification of all the various *śakti*s. Thus, He is called *śaktimān,* the one who holds the Powers, or rather "holds space" for their unfolding. However, since Śiva is literally nothing without the Powers of Consciousness, Bliss, Will, and so on, it is usually Śakti who is worshipped as the highest principle in NŚT. Śiva is that which grounds and coheres the various powers; He is the Lord of the Family (*kuleśvara*), the center axis of the spinning wheel of Powers. As the coherent force, Śiva hardly has an insignificant function, but as he is not an embodiment of potency himself, he is less likely to attract worship in a spiritual system that is focused primarily on the *empowerment* of its adherents.

The previous paragraph defined Śiva primarily as spaciousness, the hosting space for the energy that is Śakti. This space/energy polarity is the one given in a Trika text called *Vijñāna-bhairava*, among other sources. We should note that in other contexts, the roles are defined differently. For example, the influential Recognition school (a subset of the Trika) defines Śiva-Śakti as the two complementary aspects of one divine Consciousness: Śiva is the Light of Manifestation (*prakāśa*), also known as the Light of Consciousness (*cit-prakāśa*), and Śakti is blissful Self-reflective awareness (*vimarśa*). This pairing is sometimes concisely abbreviated as *cid-ānanda* (Awareness-Bliss). In this way of understanding Śiva-Śakti, He is the illuminative power of Consciousness that manifests and shines as all things, and She is the power by which

that same Consciousness folds back on itself and becomes self-aware and thus can enjoy itself. While new students of the Tantra often want a simple, cut-and-dried definition of the polarity of Śiva-Śakti, the tradition does not offer one. Indeed, as this paragraph has shown, we get different definitions within the very same school. These need not be seen as contradictory, however, for the ultimate reality of Śiva-Śakti transcends all thought; the diverse explanations are just varying orientations or angles of approach to that one Reality, serving different students in different contexts.

In another schema, that of the radical Krama school, Śiva disappears entirely, for there the two aspects of the One are represented as different facets of one Goddess: the indescribable Void of absolute potential, the formless ground of all reality (Śiva's usual role) is represented as the dark and emaciated, terrifyingly attractive Goddess Kālī, who devours all things and makes them one with Herself; and the infinite Light that encompasses all things and beings with loving compassion and insight is represented as white and full-bodied Goddess Parā, overflowing with boundless nectar. But, Abhinava Gupta stresses, these apparent opposites (black and white, empty and full) are simply the two forms of the one great Goddess. The Krama school simply wishes to avoid the inevitably dualistic implications of the image of Śiva-Śakti as two beings joined together.

How to reconcile these different presentations? The answer is simple: they need no reconciliation, for they are each perfectly fitted to the system in which they occur; and the absolute Reality beyond words can be represented by any of these schemas or by none.

It is important to note that the term Śiva or "God" never loses its importance in this tradition. Some might construe the more refined philosophies of NŚT as atheistic because they wholly repudiate the notion of God as a separate person, "a guy in the sky," or indeed as

anything separate from your essence-nature as dynamic free Awareness. Yet it is significant that these very traditions continue to use the term "God" and its synonyms (such as *maheśvara*, "the Great Lord," and *parameśvara,* "the Supreme Divinity"). It seems to me that they do not want to dispense with the love and devotion that is inspired in so many by this personalizing of the Absolute. They want a path of intimate relationship. At the same time, remember that the tradition gives us a beautiful nondual definition of the word "God," one worth repeating:

> *...in actuality it is the unbounded Light of Consciousness, reposing in its innate Bliss, fully connected to its Powers of Willing, Knowing, and Acting, that we call God. (Essence of the Tantras)*

It is in the context of this definition that we may understand such scriptural statements as "Nothing exists that is not God."[46] But here we are anticipating the next segment: for "beyond" even *tattva* #1 is that which unfolds all the *tattva*s, from 1 to 36, within itself as the expression of its blissful self-awareness.

TATTVA #0: THE HEART (Śiva/Śakti in perfect fusion)

This secret *tattva*, taught only in the esoteric nondual Tantrik sources, is the key to understanding the whole philosophy of nondual Tantra. It is #0 because it does not crown the hierarchy, for as we have seen, the "highest" *tattva* is absolutely transcendent Śiva. But the Ultimate Principle (*paramārtha*), *tattva* #0, is not transcendent; for to transcend is to go beyond and, thus, to exclude. In nondual understanding, the Ultimate must be that which simultaneously transcends *and* encompasses all things. It is the supreme paradox, for it expresses itself *as* the very substance of all things while simultaneously being something more than simply the sum of all perceptible realities.

This absolute principle cannot be written in the *tattva* list, for it pervades the whole as the indefinable essence of all things, manifest or unmanifest. It is absolutely incomprehensible by the mind. Abhinava says:

> *This whole universe is One Reality—unbroken by time, uncircumscribed by space, unclouded by attributes, unconfined by forms, inexpressible by words, and impossible to understand with the ordinary means of knowledge. (Essence of the Tantras)*

This all-pervasive and ultimate Reality, subtler than the subtlest, beyond the highest transcendent Śiva and yet closer to you than your own breath, equally present in the most sublime refined pure awareness of infinite openness and in the scent of the foulest excrement, its radiantly beautiful divine nature never tainted though it shines equally in the form of all that is called pure and impure—this is what Abhinava's lineage calls the Heart (*hṛdaya*) or the Essence (*sāra*) of Reality. He also gives it more mysterious names, citing the scriptures: he calls it *Visarga*, the Absolute Potential, *Spanda*, the Vibration, *Ūrmi*, the Wave, *Dṛk*, the Vision, and *Yāmala*, the Couple: the perfect fusion of Śiva and Śakti as one. It is this same ultimate principle that is worshipped in radically nondual Goddess Tantra as Kālī Kāla-sankarṣaṇī: the radiant Dark, the resounding Silence, the Devourer of Time—by which is meant the timeless ground of the cycle of creation, stasis, and dissolution.

This is the doctrine of "the higher nonduality" (*paramādvaya*) which subsumes both duality and ordinary nonduality. It is all-encompassing, including even duality as a level within the Real, whereas ordinary nonduality simply negates duality as wrong or false. But duality *is* a level of reality, an undeniable experience, and a meaningful realm of discourse, so no system is complete that simply denies it. And just as duality is superseded by the more encompassing truth of nonduality,

that too is superseded, and subsumed, by the all-encompassing truth of the higher nonduality.

This Heart, this Vibration, this Essence, is the light by which all things are illuminated, the reality by which all things are real. It is the omnipresent divinity, manifest *equally* in all things. Philosophers tend to object to this articulation of the nature of reality, saying that if everything is equally divine, the word "divine" loses its meaning and value, because something has value only in opposition to something else that doesn't. While this objection is perfectly rational, it is operating on a level of understanding that for Tāntrikas is superseded by the immediate mystical experience that initiates share—an experience in which everything is indeed perceived as equally suffused with beautiful divine radiance, in which the total freedom and joy of being permeate the entire sphere of perception, and in which no phenomena whatsoever can be perceived as anything less than absolutely perfect. This vision of reality has been labeled "transrational" because of the fact that it cannot be fully understood by the ordinary mind, despite the fact that the one who has had the experience usually considers it the most intensely real experience of her life. (Even this experience, though, is merely a pointer to the state of abiding in oneness with the ground of reality, which is not an experience per se, since all experiences come and go. Nothing can be said in words about the non-state of *nirvāṇa,* permanently abiding in the Heart of reality.)

This is *not* to say that in this expanded mode of perception, everything is considered the same. In fact, diversity is very much a part of this aesthetic mode, as this way of seeing celebrates all things as *different* expressions of one reality. In fact, every thing is beautiful to the Tāntrika precisely *because* it expresses the One principle differently. Every sentient being is worthy of reverence because she expresses her Godhood in a unique manner, never seen before and never to be seen

again.

The spiritual experience of one Divinity pulsating joyously in all that exists, as well as paradoxically present in the repose in the non-state of complete stillness and emptiness, is considered a gift of divine grace. Yet it can only be fully understood, cultivated, and firmly rooted as abiding realization through spiritual practice.

THE THREE IMPURITIES

(WITH AN EXCURSUS ON THE DESCENT OF POWER)

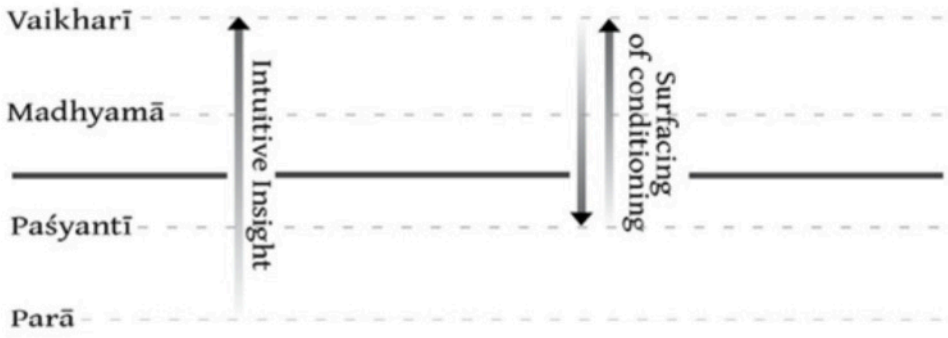
Though the *tattva* schema purports to be a complete account of all the principles of reality, there are three important principles not enumerated in that list. (Some consider them as aspects of *māyā-tattva*; others suggest they are not in the list because they are not truly real.) These are the three *mala*s, or "impurities" (not to be confused with *mālā*, which is a garland or rosary). The three *mala*s constitute our experience of bondage. From the nondual viewpoint, they are not truly stains; they are simply ignorance, or rather limited perception, which Consciousness has taken on in order to become a finite individual, and which it can choose to relinquish at any time. The first and most basic of the three is the *āṇava-mala* or "Impurity of Individuality"; the second is the *māyīya-mala* or "Impurity of Differentiation", and the third is the *kārma-mala* or "Impurity of Action", We will look at each in turn.

THE IMPURITY OF INDIVIDUALITY

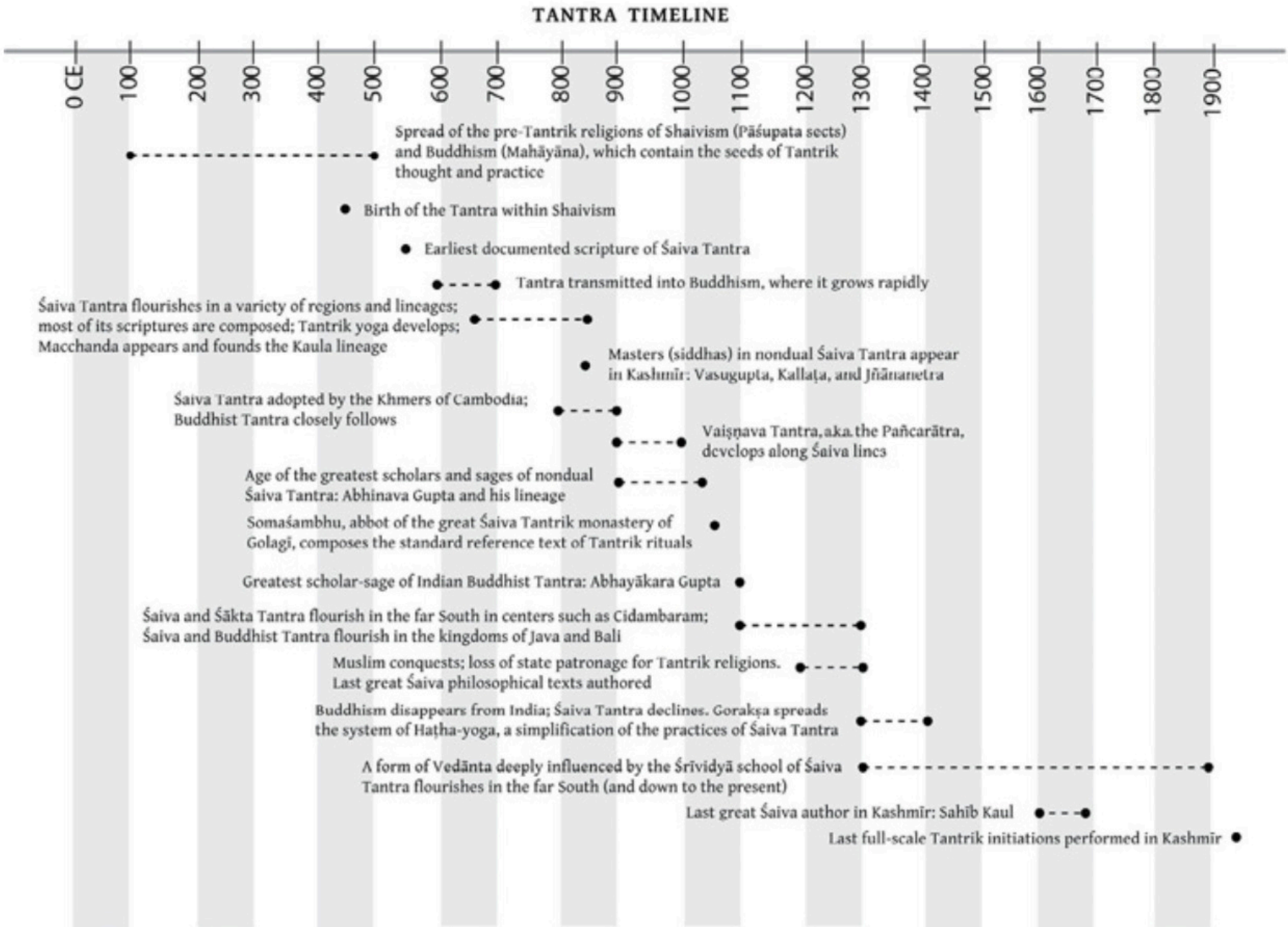
The Impurity of Individuality is fundamental because the other two Impurities could not exist without it and also because it constitutes the very basis of the limitation that makes us finite beings. This is the

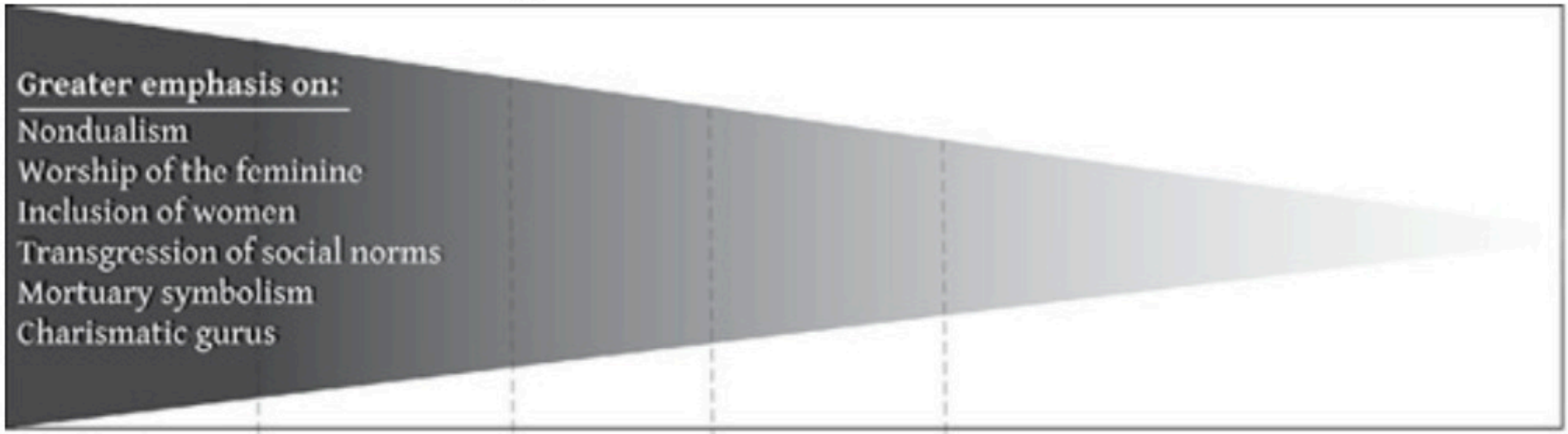
Signifier (vācaka), the inner Path	**Signified (vācya), the outer Path**
1. *varṇa* (phonemes, subtle pulsations)	4. *kalā* (5 major divisions of reality)
2. *mantra* (morphemes, thought-units)	5. *tattva* (36 principles of reality)
3. *pada* (words and phrases)	6. *bhuvana* (118 planes of reality)

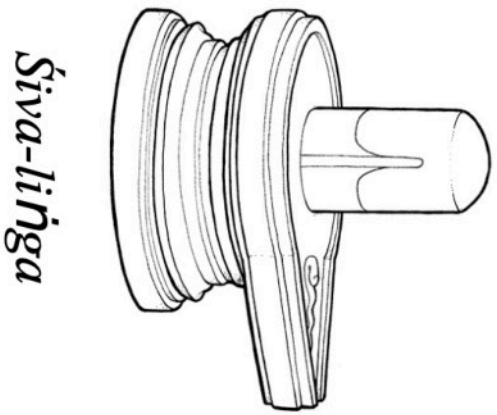
Name	Translation	Predominant aspect of consciousness	Predominant Śakti	Sphere of perception
4. *Vaikharī*	Corporeal	object	Action	duality
3. *Madhyamā*	Intermediate	process	Knowledge	synthesis
2. *Paśyantī*	Visionary	subject	Will	nonduality
1. *Parā*	Supreme	transcendental subject	Freedom	supreme nonduality



State	Body	Associated Breath	Predominant aspect of Consciousness	Predominant sphere of perception
Waking	Physical	Out-breath	Object	Duality
Dreaming	Subtle	In-breath	Object-impressions	Unity-in-diversity
Deep Sleep	Causal	Samāna	Subject	Nonduality (unaware)
The Fourth	Supracausal	Udāna	Subject	Nonduality (aware)
Beyond the Fourth	All/none	Vyāna	Transindividual subjectivity	Supreme nonduality

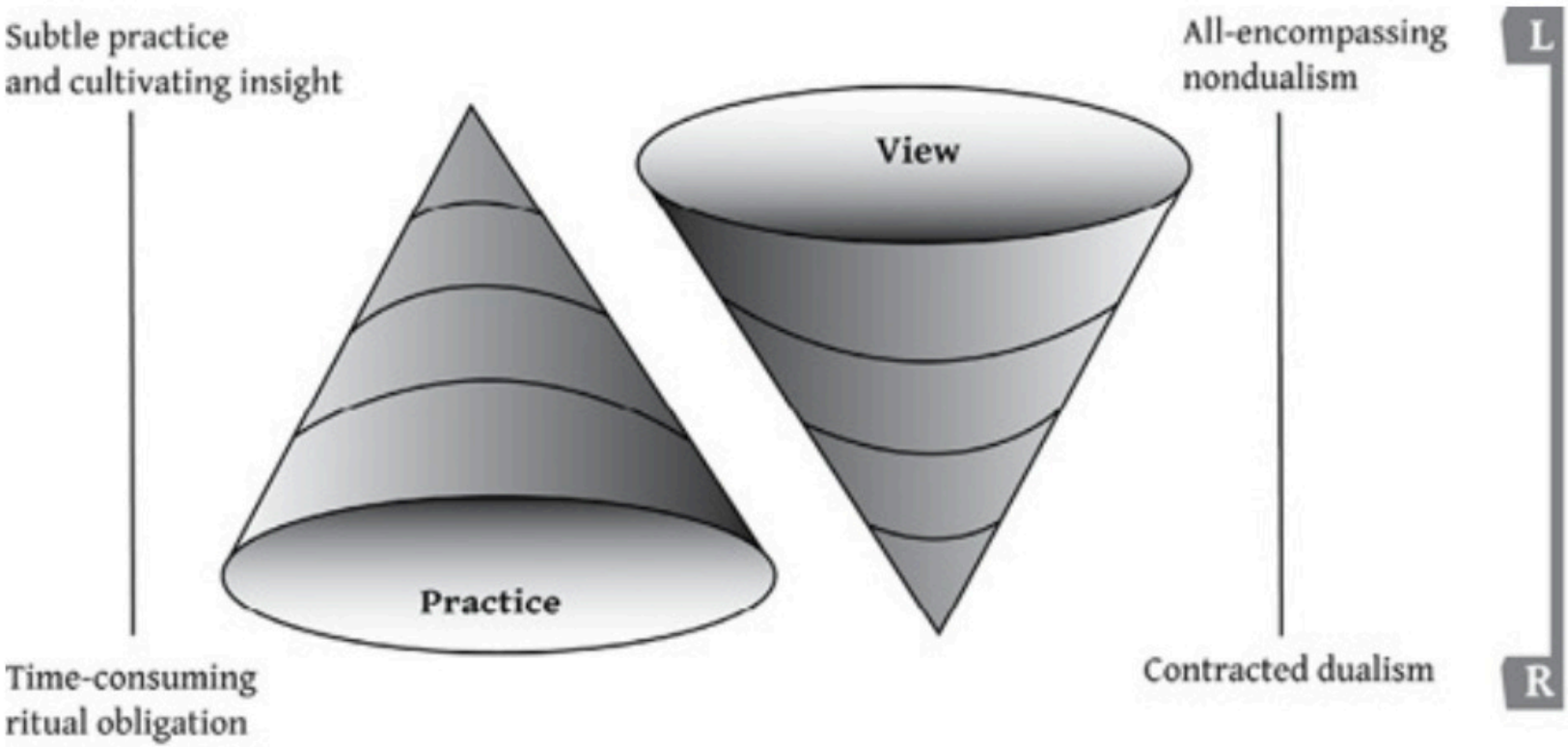

TANTRA TIMELINE
0 CE
100
200
300
400
500
600
700
800
900
1000
1100
1200
1300
1400
1500
1600
1700
1800
1900
Spread of the pre-Tantrik religions of Shaivism (Pāśupata sects) and Buddhism (Mahāyāna), which contain the seeds of Tantrik thought and practice
Birth of the Tantra within Shaivism
Earliest documented scripture of Śaiva Tantra
Tantra transmitted into Buddhism, where it grows rapidly
Śaiva Tantra flourishes in a variety of regions and lineages; most of its scriptures are composed; Tantrik yoga develops; Macchanda appears and founds the Kaula lineage
Masters (siddhas) in nondual Śaiva Tantra appear in Kashmīr: Vasugupta, Kallaṭa, and Jñānamaitra
Śaiva Tantra adopted by the Khmers of Cambodia; Buddhist Tantra closely follows
Vaiṣṇava Tantra, aka the Pañcarātra, develops along Śaiva lines
Age of the greatest scholars and sages of nondual Śaiva Tantra: Abhinava Gupta and his lineage
Somaśambhu, abbot of the great Śaiva Tantrik monastery of Golagī, composes the standard reference text of Tantrik rituals
Greatest scholar-sage of Indian Buddhist Tantra: Abhayākara Gupta
Śaiva and Śākta Tantra flourish in the far South in centers such as Cidambaram; Śaiva and Buddhist Tantra flourish in the kingdoms of Java and Bali
Muslim conquests; loss of state patronage for Tantrik religions. Last great Śaiva philosophical texts authored
Buddhism disappears from India; Śaiva Tantra declines. Gorakṣa spreads the system of Haṭha-yoga, a simplification of the practices of Śaiva Tantra
A form of Vedānta deeply influenced by the Śrīvidyā school of Śaiva Tantra flourishes in the far South (and down to the present)
Last great Śaiva author in Kashmīr: Sahīb Kaul
Last full-scale Tantrik initiations performed in Kashmīr


Greater emphasis on:
Nondualism
Worship of the feminine
Inclusion of women
Transgression of social norms
Mortuary symbolism
Charismatic gurus
[7]Krama
Kaula Trika
[6]Trika
[4]Dakṣiṇa
[1]Siddhānta


Śiva-liṅga

THE NINE SAMPRADĀYAS OF ORIGINAL ŚIVA-ŚAKTI TANTRA

- ***Śaiva Siddhānta*** – the Orthodox Doctrine
- ***Vāma*** – the Feminine
- ***Yāmala*** – the Couple
- ***Mantrapīṭha*** – the Throne of Mantras
- ***Amṛteśvara*** – the Lord of Nectar
- ***Trika*** – the Trinity
- ***Kālīkula*** – the Family of Kālī
- ***Kaubjika*** – Kubjikā's Tradition
- ***Śrīvidyā*** – the Goddess of Auspicious Wisdom

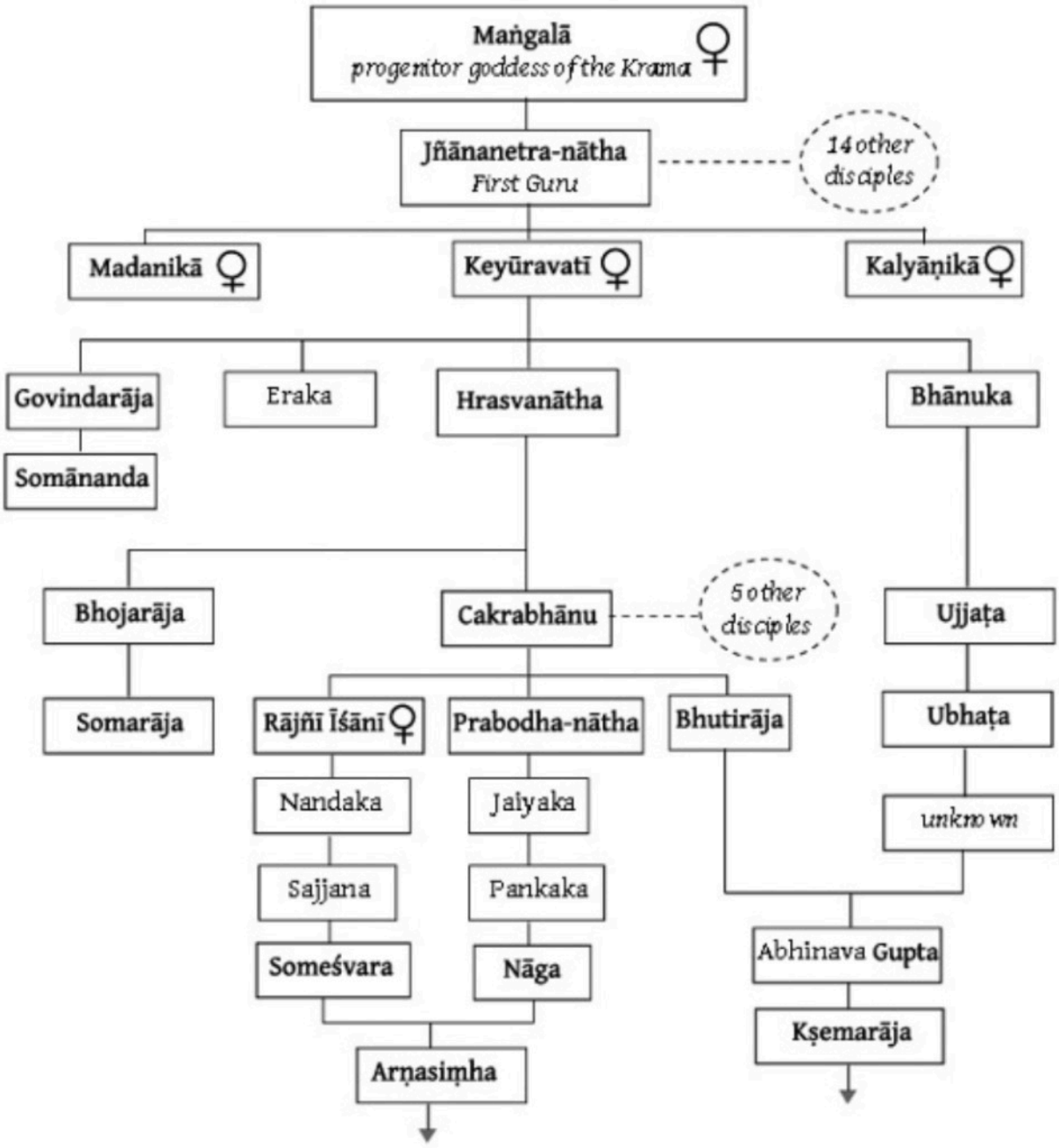

Subtle practice
and cultivating insight
Time-consuming
ritual obligation
Practice
View
All-encompassing
nondualism
Contracted dualism
L
R

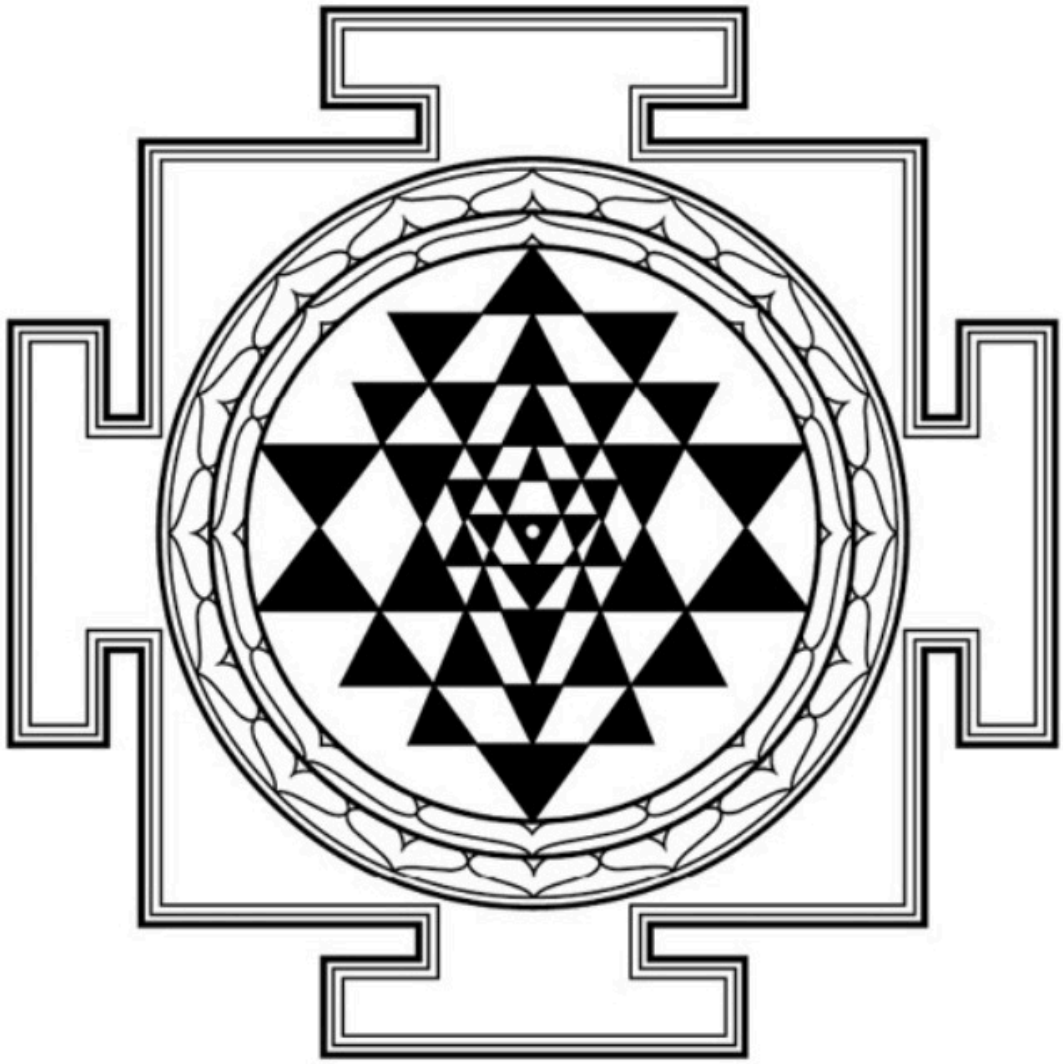
Vāma	Mantrapīṭha
Feminine	Masculine
Sensual	Mortuary
Creation	Dissolution
Knowing	Acting
Left channel	Right channel
Inhale	Exhale

Parā	Parāparā	Aparā
Knower	Knowledge	Known
Willing	Knowing	Acting
Unity	Unity-in-diversity	Diversity
Emission	Stasis	Reabsorption

Upper board	Lower board
outgoing breath	ingoing breath
immanence	transcendence
immersion into extroversive expansion	immersion into introversive expansion
all-encompassing Fullness	all-devouring Emptiness
full-figured sweet Goddess	emaciated fierce Goddess

The Krama Guru Lineage





[7]Kālīkula
[6]Trika
[3]Yāmala
The Vidyāpīṭha
[4]Mantrapīṭha
[5]Amṛteśvara
Bhairava-tantras
[1]Śaiva Siddhānta
ŚAIVA TANTRA
Time
Specificity of Revelation
nondual
dual
Goddess-centered
Śiva-centered
transgressive
non-transgressive

Teachings in the *haṭha-yoga* texts that are sourced directly

from Tantrik scriptures

❖ the subtle body physiology of 72,000 channels (*nāḍīs*) with 10 primary channels, of which three are most important;

❖ the analogizing of those three primary channels to the three radiances of sun, moon, and fire;

❖ explanation of the functions of the ten vital energies (*prāṇa-vāyus*);

❖ installation and activation of mantras in the subtle centers of the body;

❖ the mantra of the "recitation of the Self" (*haṃsa, so'ham*) occurring naturally 21,600 times per day;

❖ the opening of the heart center analogized to a blossoming lotus;

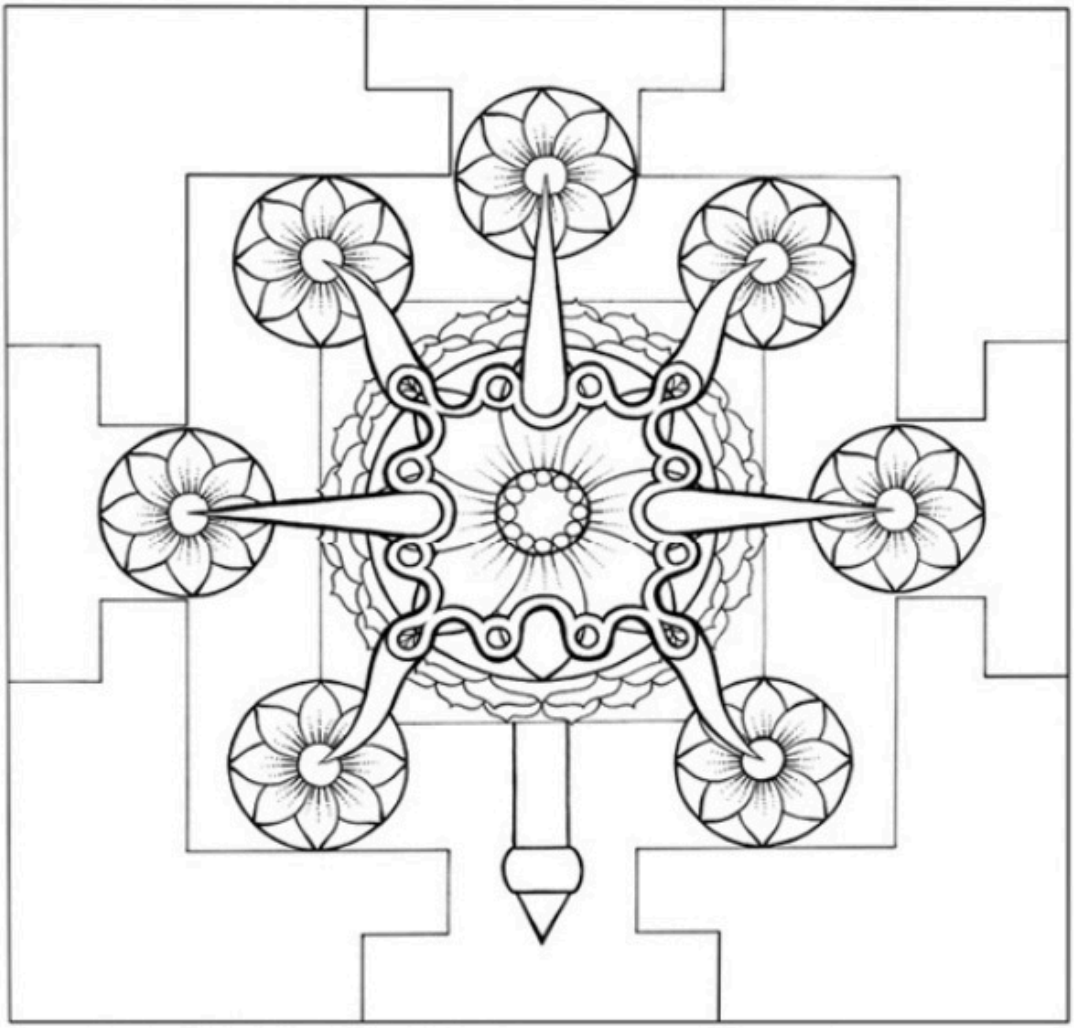
❖ ascension of the soul through the central channel (*suṣumnā nāḍī*) by means of *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā*, and *dhyāna*;

❖ description of the primal Goddess who effects this process as the "coiled power" (*kuṇḍalinī*); and

❖ the fructification of *yoga-sādhanā* known as the experience of "nectar pervasion."

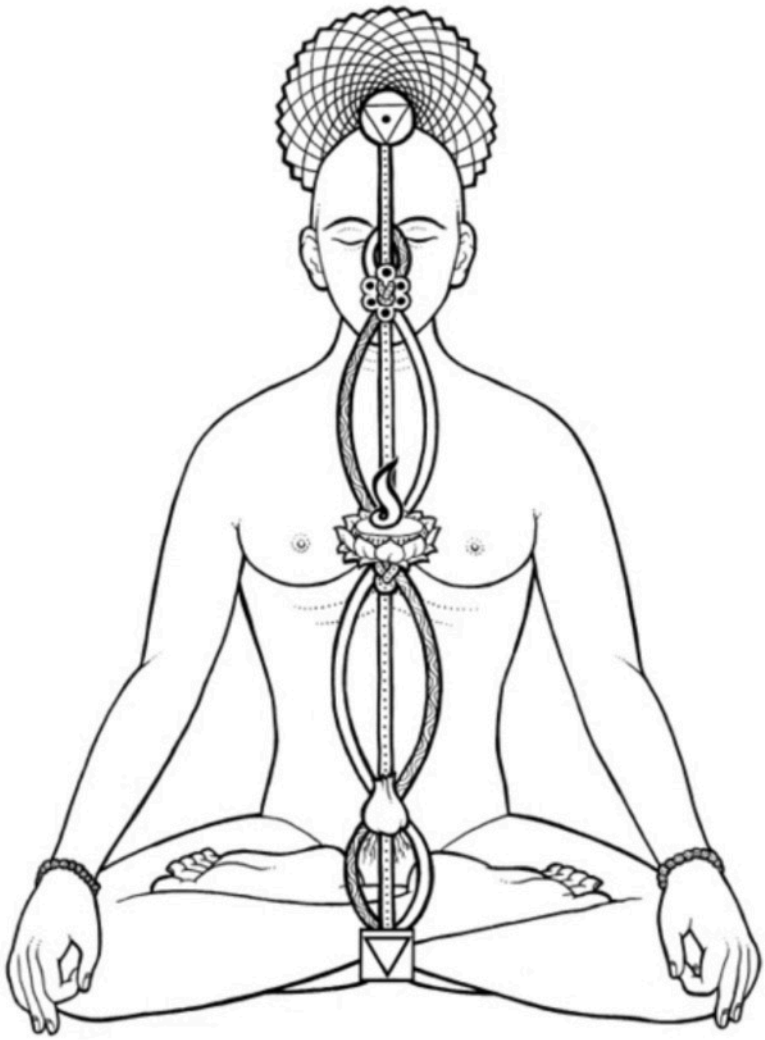
The Ten *Mahāvidyās*

- Kālī (The Dark Goddess)
- Tārā (She Who Saves)
- Tripurasundarī (Beautiful in the Three Worlds)
- Bhuvaneśvarī (She Whose Body Is the Earth)
- Chinnamastā (the Self-Decapitated Goddess)
- Bhairavī (the Fierce Goddess)
- Dhūmāvatī (the Smoke-Colored Widow)
- Bagalamukhī (the Paralyzer of Demons)
- Mātangī (the Outcaste Goddess)
- Kamalā (the Lotus Goddess)



Method *(upāya)*	**Operative Power**	**Level of Experience**	**Center**	**Process**
The Divine Means *Śāmbhava-upāya*	Willing *icchā-śakti*	Unity *abheda*	spirit/ intuition	nonsequential *akrama*
The Empowered Means *Śākta-upāya*	Knowing *jñāna-śakti*	Unity-in-Diversity *bhedābheda*	heart-mind/ energy	sequential-cum-nonsequential *kramākrama*
The Individual Means *Āṇava-upāya*	Acting *kriyā-śakti*	Plurality *bheda*	body	sequential *krama*

Name	Meaning	Light	Location	Breath	Cognitive aspect
suṣumnā	"graceful"	Fire	Central (spine)	*udāna* (rising)	knower
pingalā	"reddish"	Sun	Right-dominant	*prāṇa* (exhale)	knowing
iḍā	"refreshing"	Moon	Left-dominant	*apāna* (inhale)	known

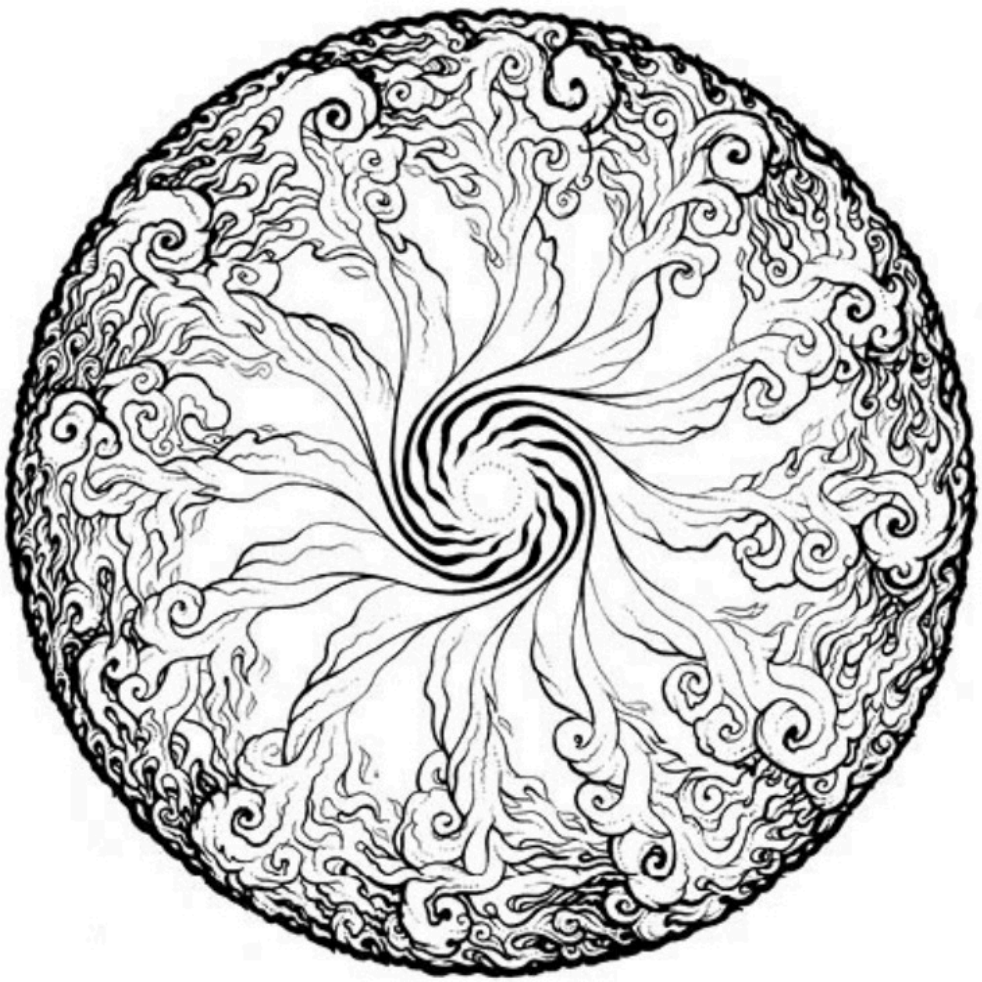


Note that this image depicts the classical Trika system of five cakras, which correspond to the five primary elements. The triangles at the bottom and top signify the Lower and Upper Kuṇḍalinī; we also see the kanda (bulb), the heart lotus with its "sprout of flame," and the palate cakra, surrounded by the six black dots of the wind element.

the crown of the head and then moving down toward the base of the heart, you can breathe in to the pearly-white left-dominant lunar channel, seeing it glowing as the *prāṇa* flows along it. The moon sets in the heart center (in the area of the sternum or the xiphoid process), and the breath pauses just before "dawn" in a *kumbhaka* (breath retention), while you experience absolute centeredness. Then the sun rises from the heart center and the *prāṇa* flows up along the reddish right-dominant solar channel and exits out the top of the head. Continue this, gently increasing the time of the pause between the breaths, feeling it as a holding of the solar and lunar vibrations in perfect balance, until a palpable energy (for example, heat or pressure or vibration) arises in the heart center. This is the Fire of Mahābhairava, the one energy that expresses in the three aspects described above. The more you practice the technique, the more powerful it becomes.

Another way of doing this practice, which I discovered through the translation work of Chris Tompkins, is through the following visualization. Vividly imagine the sun rising in the base of the heart center, and slowly exhale it up the central channel until it emerges from the crown of the head. Then visualize the full moon above the head, inhale it down the central channel until it sets in the base of the heart, and hold *kumbhaka.* Then visualize the sun rising once again in the same location. Continue this breath/visualization practice until there comes a *kumbhaka* in which the setting moon and the rising sun are both fully present at the base of the heart in perfect equilibrium; their energies fuse into the Fire of Mahābhairava (white moon + red sun = orange fire).

The 12-spoked Wheel of Fire

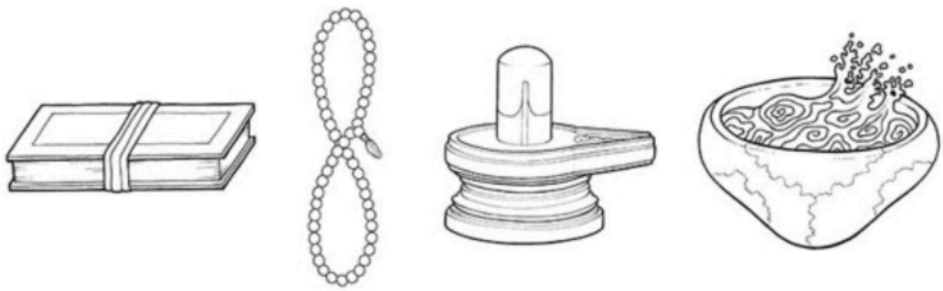


varies widely depending on which sect we are looking at. For some, they are considered actual "persons," incomprehensibly powerful beings whom we can enter into relationship with, and who are empowered by our worship even as we are blessed by them. For others, the deities are simply particular vibrations of the Light (*deva* actually means "shining one"), harmonic frequencies as it were of the One energy, experienced by us as distinct flavors of exalted Consciousness. What I find interesting is that Tāntrikas on both ends of the spectrum just described agree that the primary mantra of a deity *is* that deity in sound form. Thus, unlike in some other religions, you can (and must) have direct contact with your deity every day: by reciting their mantra, you are caressing their "sonic body" with your very tongue. Of course, you must be initiated into their mantra for it to be alive (*caitanya*) for you (though on rare occasions, a mantra can spontaneously come to life for someone—if this has ever happened to you, you will not have to ask whether it has). A dead or inert (*jaḍa*) mantra is just a word.

Thus, when we enquire into the nature of a Tantrik deity, we find four aspects in play, three "bodies" (*mūrti*) and one essence (*svabhāva*). From coarse to subtle, less essential to more essential, we have 1) the anthropomorphic, iconographic image of the deity (having so many arms, holding certain symbolic implements, etc.); 2) the *maṇḍala* or mystic diagram of the deity (nowadays also called yantra[176]); 3) the mantra of the deity; and 4) the essence-nature or energy of the deity, which may or may not inhabit any of the previous three bodies. The mantra is the most essential of the three bodies because the deity's energy *always* inheres in it if you received it in an alive state, that is, if you were initiated into it by a qualified guru or *ācārya* for whom it is fully alive. By contrast, the deity must be summoned into the first two bodies on every occasion of worship. This is why we use the phrase "mantra-deity" to refer to the fundamental form of energy that an

initiate works with in ritual. Remember that in the classical period Śaiva Tantra's own name for itself was *Mantra-mārga,* "the Way of Mantras." Now you are beginning to see why.

A practitioner may summon the energy of the deity into other prescribed substrates as well (any of which can serve as body #1 above). The classical list follows: a smooth, mirror-like surface; a *liṅga*; a rosary (*mālā*); a skull-cup; a skull-staff (*khaṭvānga*); a statue of Himālayan cedar, gold, or of fired and painted clay; a sword; a mirror; a Tantrik scripture; a painting of the deity on cloth; or an image incised on a human skull.[177]



It is crucial to note here that the energy of the deity can equally well be summoned into an *internal* substrate (such as a visualization) as well as an external one (such as a statue, image, or mystic diagram). Indeed, the inner rite is primary, for the external rite cannot be performed without the inner one, but the reverse is not true.

OUTLINE OF TANTRIK RITUAL BASED ON THE ORIGINAL SOURCES[178]

Daily Tantrik ritual has these three basic components:

I. Worship of the door-guardians and removal of obstacles

II. Five types of purification/divinization (*pañca-śuddhi*) and inner worship (*antar-yāga*)

III. External worship

SELECT LIST OF TEACHERS OF ORIGINAL ŚAIVA TANTRA*

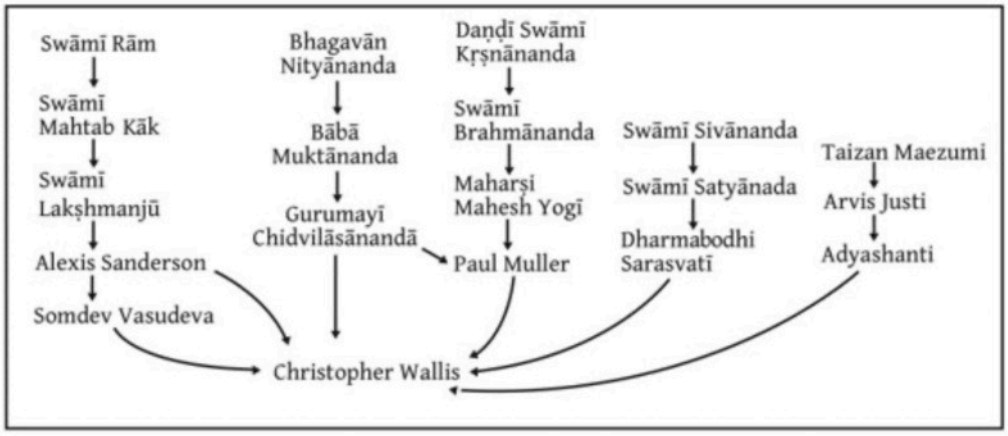
Name	Location	Website
Swāmī Shankarānanda	Australia	www.shivayoga.org

Name	Location	Website
Paul Muller-Ortega	United States	www.bluethroatyoga.com
Swāmī Niranjanānanda	India	www.yogavision.net
Swāmī Janakānanda	Sweden	www.yogameditation.com
Dharmabodhi Sarasvatī	Thailand United States	www.dharmainc.org
Paṇḍit Rajmani Tigunait	United States	www.himalayanistitute.org
Swāmī Chetanānanda	United States	www.themovementcenter.com
Christopher Tompkins	United States	www.shaivayoga.com
Swāmī Khecaranātha	United States	www.rudramandir.com
Christopher Wallis	United States	www.mattamayura.org www.christopherwallis.org

*This list does not pretend to be complete. It simply seeks to make the reader aware of some learning resources available through teachers that have studied Śaiva Tantra and are more or less aligned with the concepts presented in this book.

My Teachers

http://www.themovementcenter.com



DZOGCHEN: THE TANTRIK YOGA OF THE NYINGMAPAS AND BÖNPOS

As long as we are discussing practice gurus, it would be remiss of me to not return to the topic of the similarity to nondual Śaiva Tantra of one of the most remarkable of the Buddhist traditions—that is, Dzogchen. If you have resonated strongly with the teachings in this book, especially those of the Krama, but are more drawn to the aesthetic and culture of Buddhism than that of any of the above practice teachers, then you will feel very much at home with a good Dzogchen teacher. Note that Dzogchen defies easy categorization as Buddhist Tantra, since it declares itself as being "beyond Tantra" and since it holds views that are not so clearly Buddhist—because they are so close to Śaiva views, and because Dzogchen is taught just as frequently by adherents of the other major Tibetan religion, Bön.

Let's look for a moment at the core Dzogchen teaching, so you can see how similar it really is. It is said that the first to propagate Dzogchen teachings in Tibet was Padma-sambhava himself (c. 8th century), who went there from Uḍḍiyāna. This small kingdom is also, probably not coincidentally, the birthplace of the Krama tradition. Dzogchen, which means "the Great Perfection," teaches that everything is Consciousness. The word in Tibetan is *rigpa*, derived from the Sanskrit *vidyā* (as in

Stage 5: Internal Alchemy & Chi

Having journeyed through the realms of dream and astral training, Stage 5 invites you deeper into the transformative processes of internal alchemy—the ancient art of refining your subtle energies and awakening the latent power within your body and spirit. Rooted in Taoist, tantric, and yogic traditions, this stage focuses on cultivating, transmuting, and harmonizing your life force energy (chi/prana) to achieve heightened states of awareness, healing, and spiritual illumination.

Through disciplined practice of breathwork, meditation, and energy circulation, you will learn to dissolve blockages, activate energy centers, and fuse earthly vitality with cosmic consciousness. Internal alchemy serves as the crucible where raw spiritual potential is refined into radiant light, preparing you for profound spiritual mastery and integration. Stage 5 is the laboratory of the lightbody, where the physical and metaphysical converge, and where true sovereignty over your inner world is forged.

Stage 5: Internal Alchemy & Chi — Core Concepts Explained

1. The Nature of Chi (Qi) / Prana

Chi is the vital life force energy that flows through all living beings.

Understanding chi is foundational because it powers all spiritual transformation and healing in internal alchemy.

2. Energy Channels and Centers

The subtle body contains energy channels (nadis/meridians) and centers (chakras/dantians).

Knowing how energy moves and accumulates is essential for directing and refining chi.

3. Breath as the Bridge

Breathwork (pranayama or Taoist breathing) controls the flow of chi.

Conscious breathing is the primary tool for awakening and circulating energy.

4. The Alchemical Process

Internal alchemy is the process of refining raw chi into spiritual gold—purifying and transmuting lower energies into higher states.

This involves stages often described as transforming essence (jing), energy (qi), and spirit (shen).

5. Microcosmic Orbit / Energy Circulation

A key practice is the Microcosmic Orbit, circulating chi through specific channels to balance and energize the body.

This circulation fuels the lightbody and awakens latent spiritual faculties.

6. Kundalini Awakening and Lightbody Activation

Kundalini is the dormant serpent energy at the base of the spine, a powerful force for transformation.

Awakening kundalini must be done safely and gradually to avoid energetic overwhelm.

Activation of the lightbody allows multi-dimensional awareness and healing.

7. Integration of Body, Mind, and Spirit

Internal alchemy unites physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness into a harmonious whole.

It is both a healing system and a path of enlightenment.

8. Daily Practices and Discipline

Regular meditation, breathwork, and energy exercises are necessary to progress.

Consistency is more important than intensity.

9. Signs of Progress and Challenges

Practitioners should recognize subtle shifts in energy, emotional states, and perception.

Challenges may include energetic blockages, emotional release, or physical sensations; these are part of the process.

10. Ethical Use of Energy

Internal alchemy requires respect for the power being cultivated.

It should be practiced with humility, integrity, and responsibility.

1. The Nature of Chi (Qi) / Prana

Chi, also known as Qi in Chinese traditions or Prana in Indian yogic systems, is the fundamental life force energy that animates all living beings. It flows through invisible channels in the body, sustaining physical vitality, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness. Understanding chi is essential because it forms the basis of all internal alchemy work—by learning to sense, cultivate, and direct this energy, practitioners can begin to transform themselves on the deepest levels.

Chi is not just a physical phenomenon but a bridge between the material and spiritual realms. It carries information, intention, and consciousness. When balanced and flowing freely, chi supports health, emotional balance, and spiritual connection. When blocked or depleted, it leads to illness, fatigue, and spiritual stagnation.

Practice Tip:

Begin by tuning into your breath and body sensations. Notice subtle feelings of warmth, tingling, or movement in the hands, feet, or torso as you breathe slowly and deeply. This is your chi becoming more perceptible.

2. Energy Channels and Centers

The subtle body is composed of a complex network of energy channels (known as nadis in Indian tradition or meridians in Chinese medicine) through which chi flows. Along these channels are energy centers—called chakras in yogic traditions or dantians in Taoism—that act as focal points for energy accumulation and transformation. Understanding these channels and centers is crucial for effective internal alchemy. When chi flows smoothly through the channels and energizes the centers, physical, emotional, and spiritual health is enhanced. Blockages or imbalances in these pathways lead to energetic stagnation and disease.

Key points to grasp:

The Ren and Du meridians (Central Front and Back channels) are the primary conduits for energy circulation in many Taoist practices.

Chakras are spinning vortices of energy that correspond to physical organs and spiritual qualities.

The Lower Dantian (just below the navel) is often considered the main energy reservoir, essential for grounding and vitality.

Practice Tip:

Begin by focusing your awareness on one energy center at a time—feel its location, imagine it glowing or spinning, and invite chi to gather there. This builds sensitivity to subtle energies and prepares you for circulation practices.

3. Breath as the Bridge

Breath is the fundamental bridge between the physical body and the subtle energy system. Through conscious breathing—known in yogic terms as pranayama, and in Taoist practice as controlled breathing—you directly influence the flow and quality of chi.

The breath carries chi into the body, distributes it through energy channels, and helps release blockages. Mastering breath control is essential because it allows you to cultivate, refine, and direct life force energy intentionally.

Key techniques include:

Deep abdominal breathing: Filling the lower belly on the inhale to activate the lower dantian and anchor energy.

Slow, even breath: Calming the nervous system and stabilizing chi flow.

Breath retention: Used carefully, this intensifies chi cultivation and builds internal power.

Practice Tip:

Begin with simple deep abdominal breaths: inhale slowly through the nose, filling your belly, hold briefly, then exhale gently. Focus your mind on the sensation of breath and the movement of chi.

4. The Alchemical Process

Internal alchemy is the transformative process of refining your raw life energy (chi) into spiritual gold—a metaphor for awakening and enlightenment. This ancient practice is often described as transmuting the “Three Treasures”: Jing (essence), Qi (energy), and Shen (spirit).

Jing (Essence): The physical vitality or life essence stored in the body, especially in the kidneys.

Qi (Energy): The dynamic life force flowing through channels and centers.

Shen (Spirit): The luminous consciousness or divine spark within.

The alchemical process moves these energies through stages of purification, consolidation, and transformation, ultimately harmonizing body, mind, and spirit. This is a gradual, careful practice—rushing it can cause energetic imbalance.

Practice Tip:

Cultivate awareness of your body’s subtle sensations and emotions. Begin gentle energy circulation practices to refine and transmute lower energies, supporting the awakening of higher consciousness.

5. Microcosmic Orbit / Energy Circulation
The Microcosmic Orbit is a fundamental internal alchemy practice that involves circulating chi through two main energy channels: the Ren (front channel) and Du (back channel) meridians, forming a continuous energetic loop. This circulation balances yin and yang energies, clears blockages, and energizes the entire subtle body.

By consciously guiding the breath and attention along this orbit, practitioners strengthen their lightbody and awaken dormant spiritual faculties. This practice is often the cornerstone of Taoist internal alchemy and has parallels in other traditions as well.

Practice Tip:

Start by imagining a flow of warm energy rising along your spine (Du channel) on the inhale and descending along your front (Ren channel) on the exhale, completing a circuit. Use breath and gentle visualization to support the flow.

6. Kundalini Awakening and Lightbody Activation

Kundalini is the dormant serpent energy coiled at the base of the spine, representing immense spiritual potential and transformative power. Awakening kundalini initiates a profound alchemical process, activating the chakras and energizing the lightbody—the subtle energetic form that connects you to higher dimensions.

Proper kundalini awakening requires careful, gradual practice to avoid energetic overwhelm or imbalance. When safely activated, kundalini purifies the body, mind, and spirit, catalyzing deep healing and expanded consciousness.

Lightbody activation allows practitioners to perceive and navigate multi-dimensional realities, enhancing psychic abilities and spiritual sovereignty.

Practice Tip:

Support kundalini awakening through breathwork, meditation, and internal energy circulation, always respecting your body’s signals and progressing at your own pace.

7. Integration of Body, Mind, and Spirit
Internal alchemy is not merely about energy manipulation—it is the harmonization of the physical body, mental faculties, and spiritual awareness into a unified whole. This integration fosters resilience, clarity, and deepened connection to your higher self.
By refining your subtle energies and cultivating mindfulness, you dissolve internal conflicts and foster inner balance. This alignment is essential for true spiritual mastery and sustained awakening.
Practice Tip:
Incorporate mindful movement, meditation, and breath awareness daily to nurture this integration. Reflect regularly on the interplay of your thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations.

8. Daily Practices and Discipline

Consistent, disciplined practice is the backbone of internal alchemy. Spiritual transformation requires regular engagement with breathwork, meditation, energy circulation, and self-reflection.

The cumulative effect of daily rituals refines your chi, strengthens your lightbody, and deepens your awareness over time. Intensity is less important than persistence; steady practice builds a strong foundation for higher states of consciousness.

Practice Tip:

Create a simple daily routine—even 10–15 minutes of focused breathing and meditation can initiate powerful change. Track your progress and adapt as your sensitivity grows.

9. Signs of Progress and Challenges

As you engage in internal alchemy, you will notice subtle but profound shifts in your physical sensations, emotional patterns, and mental clarity. These signs of progress may include increased energy flow, heightened intuition, emotional releases, and deeper states of calm.

However, challenges such as energetic blockages, emotional discomfort, or physical sensations like heat or pressure can arise. These are natural parts of the transformation process and signal that your practice is activating deeper layers of healing.

Practice Tip:

Approach challenges with patience and self-compassion. Use grounding techniques, rest when needed, and seek guidance if overwhelm occurs.

10. Ethical Use of Energy

With great power comes great responsibility. The cultivation and manipulation of chi demand a strong ethical foundation. Internal alchemy should always be practiced with humility, respect for oneself and others, and an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life.

Using these energies for selfish or harmful purposes disrupts harmony and can create karmic consequences. True mastery lies in balancing personal empowerment with compassion and service.

Practice Tip:

Regularly reflect on your intentions and actions. Commit to using your growing energetic power for healing, protection, and the highest good.

1. The Role of Sexual Energy in Internal Alchemy

Sexual energy, often called jing or essence in Taoist and yogic traditions, is one of the most potent life forces within the body. Internal alchemy teaches that rather than dissipating this energy through unmindful release, it can be consciously transmuted into refined spiritual energy, nourishing vitality, consciousness, and longevity. Practices include breath retention, pelvic floor engagement, and energy circulation techniques designed to recycle sexual essence safely upward through the chakras or dantians. This process fuels the alchemical transformation of the body and mind. Ethical discernment and respect for personal limits are crucial to avoid depletion or imbalance.

2. Energy Blockages and Healing Modalities

Blockages in chi flow often manifest as physical pain, emotional disturbances, or mental fog. Internal alchemy incorporates methods for detecting and clearing these obstructions, such as qigong movements, acupressure, meditative visualization, or sound healing.

Adjunct healing arts like acupuncture or Reiki can support the alchemist’s work, facilitating smoother energy flow and deeper energetic cleansing.

3. Integration with Physical Health and Diet

The physical body serves as the vessel for energy cultivation. Nourishing it with clean, vital foods and a balanced lifestyle supports the energetic processes of internal alchemy.

Hydration, rest, and avoiding toxins contribute to stable chi flow and effective transformation.

Some traditions recommend specific dietary guidelines—like eating fresh, natural foods aligned with energetic qualities—to enhance vitality.

4. The Role of Mantras and Sound in Energy Cultivation

Sound and vibration are powerful tools to influence subtle energies. Chanting mantras, using seed syllables, or listening to specific frequencies can open blocked channels, stimulate energy centers, and harmonize the subtle body. Mantras act as sonic keys unlocking states of meditation and facilitating internal alchemical processes.

5. The Intersection of Internal Alchemy and Psychological Transformation

Internal alchemy is deeply intertwined with psychological work. As chi flows and refines, emotional wounds and limiting beliefs often surface for healing. This energetic purification supports shadow integration and mental clarity, enabling profound shifts in consciousness and self-awareness.

Practitioners are encouraged to couple energy practices with reflective or therapeutic methods for holistic transformation.

6. Advanced Lightbody Concepts

Beyond the physical and energetic bodies lie emotional, mental, and causal layers of the lightbody. Internal alchemy gradually activates and integrates these higher subtle bodies, expanding awareness beyond the ordinary self and enabling multidimensional spiritual work.

Understanding and working with these layers prepares the practitioner for advanced stages of awakening and ascension.

7. Common Pitfalls and Safety Protocols

Internal alchemy demands respect and caution. Overexertion, impatience, or misunderstanding can lead to energetic imbalances—manifesting as fatigue, emotional volatility, or physical symptoms. Recognizing these signs and adapting practice intensity is essential.

Safety protocols include grounding exercises, seeking guidance from experienced teachers, and maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

8. Contemporary Scientific Perspectives

Modern science increasingly explores concepts resonant with internal alchemy, such as bioenergetics and psychophysiology. Quantum biology hints at the interplay of energy fields within living organisms, offering a potential bridge between ancient wisdom and contemporary understanding.

Acknowledging this scientific interest can help legitimize and contextualize alchemical practices in today’s world.

Stage 5 Wrap-Up: Internal Alchemy & Chi

Stage 5 has guided you deep into the inner sanctum of spiritual transformation—the alchemical process of refining life force energy and awakening your lightbody. Through understanding chi, mastering breath, circulating energy, and safely activating kundalini, you have laid a vital foundation for sustained spiritual growth and sovereign power.

This stage is both a laboratory and a crucible: where body, mind, and spirit merge and transmute into a unified, radiant whole. The practices and insights shared here are gateways—tools to dismantle old energetic blockages and build resilient, luminous energy systems.

As you move forward, carry with you the discipline, respect, and awareness essential for this subtle work. The true mastery of internal alchemy unfolds over time, deepening with consistent practice and mindful integration.

Now, prepared and empowered, you stand ready to enter Stage 6—the rich world of Sufi and Islamic occult wisdom—where divine mystery and spiritual sovereignty intertwine at the highest levels.

Transition to Stage 6: Sufi & Islamic Occult Wisdom

Having refined your inner energies and awakened the latent power within your lightbody, you are now prepared to enter a realm where ancient wisdom and divine mystery converge. Stage 6 invites you into the profound spiritual sciences of Sufism and the broader Islamic occult tradition—fields rich with hidden symbolism, sacred names, angelic hierarchies, and cosmic patterns.

Here, the subtle teachings of inner purification, divine love, and mystical insight intertwine with powerful ritual technologies designed to liberate the soul from inherited constraints. This stage deepens your journey by revealing sacred keys that unlock the highest levels of sovereignty and union with the divine source.

Prepare to engage with texts, prayers, and practices that have long been veiled—now illuminated for your awakening and mastery.

The Jinn, Magic, and the Evil Eye by Sheikh Tayyar and Shaykh
This seminal work delves deeply into the nature of jinn—metaphysical entities that exist alongside humans in Islamic cosmology. Sheikh Tayyar and Shaykh explore their origins, classifications, and influence on human affairs, especially in the realm of spiritual affliction and possession. The book details traditional Islamic perspectives on magic (sihr), distinguishing between lawful and unlawful practices, and addresses the pervasive fear and reality of the evil eye (al-‘ayn)—an energetic projection believed to cause harm. Crucially, the text provides ritual methods and protective prayers designed to shield practitioners from jinnic interference and malevolent forces. It balances theological rigor with practical guidance, making it an essential manual for understanding and countering spiritual parasitism within Islamic traditions.

Ruqyah Healing Texts (Traditional Islamic Exorcism and Healing Manuals)

Ruqyah refers to the prophetic practice of healing through recitation of Qur’anic verses, prayers, and supplications. These healing texts are collections of exorcism rituals aimed at cleansing individuals from jinn possession, black magic, and the evil eye. Rooted in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, Ruqyah combines spiritual authority with ritual efficacy, employing sacred language as a potent energetic countermeasure.

The manuals include instructions for administering Ruqyah safely, often emphasizing the importance of sincere faith and ethical use. They also incorporate various invocations and protective formulas to reinforce spiritual boundaries and restore the natural flow of chi and divine protection.

Collections of Divine Names, Invocations, and Talismanic Formulas

A cornerstone of Islamic occult practice is the use of the Asma ul Husna—the 99 Names of Allah—as vibrational keys for spiritual transformation, protection, and empowerment. Alongside these, esoteric practitioners employ invocations and talismans crafted using sacred geometry and divine names to manifest specific energetic effects.

These collections serve as a toolkit for magickal sovereignty, allowing the practitioner to invoke higher forces, create spiritual firewalls, and interface with angelic realms. The formulas often require precise ritual enactment, including timed recitations, symbolic inscriptions, and meditative focus.

Liber Hermetis (Brief Overview)
Though primarily a Hermetic text, Liber Hermetis has influenced Islamic occult traditions, especially in its treatment of alchemical processes and spiritual transformation. It bridges Greco-Egyptian Hermeticism with Islamic esotericism, offering cryptic teachings on the refinement of soul and spirit. While not an Islamic text per se, its concepts of cosmic harmony and inner alchemy resonate within Stage 6’s broader framework of spiritual sovereignty.

Mafatih al-Jinan (“The Keys to the Gardens”)
Stage II: Planetary Ritual Interface & Stage VI: Sufi & Islamic Occult Systems

🧩 Summary:
Mafātīḥ al-Jinān, compiled by Shaykh Abbas Qummi, is a Shi’a Islamic prayer and ritual manual revered for its deep catalog of du’as (supplications), dhikr (remembrance), ziyarat (pilgrimages), and amal (ritual acts). Though not overtly “occult,” it is a key grimoire used for timed spiritual actions, planetary alignment, and angelic invocation in Islamic magickal practice — especially in Iran and Iraq.

🪐 Core Ritual Structures:
1. Timing by Days & Nights
Specific du’as and actions assigned to:
Each day of the week
Each Islamic month
Eid days, lunar nights, and cosmological events (e.g. Laylat al-Qadr)
These timings sync with planetary alignments and lunar mansions
2. Du’as with Energetic Effects
Protection, repulsion of jinn, wealth, healing, repentance, visionary dreams
Frequently invoke Divine Names (Asma al-Husna), Qur’anic verses, and angelic titles
3. Ziyarat (Astral Pilgrimage Invocations)
Textual “journeys” to graves of Imams — doubles as astral temple visualizations
Spiritually connects the user to a higher domain or presence (think “Qur'anic Egregores”)
4. Amal (Spiritual Operations)
Practical multi-step rituals with prep, recitation, and outcome intent
Often include bathing, incense, Qur’anic phrase sequences, and intentional planetary timing

🔑 Magical Interpretation & Use:
Islamic equivalent to a Solomonic daily cycle
➤ Compare to Liber Lunae, Picatrix, and Golden Dawn planetary hours
Energetic invocation system via Divine Names
➤ Works like Notoria-style divine name download systems
Interface for angelic alignment without explicit sigils
➤ Invocation through Qur’anic formula replaces traditional western sigil use

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:

Planetary Ritual Scheduler

➤ Map du’as to days and hours, plug into ritual calendar

Divine Name Engine

➤ Can link du’as to angelic grids from Raziel and Skinner

Spiritual Protocol UI

➤ Create templated workflows: "Need protection?" → [Night X] + [Du’a Y] + [Verse Z]

✨ Unique Contributions:

Most used Islamic spiritual book for practical application

Acts as a ritual compiler and planetary harmonizer

Validates that Islamic prayer and planetary magick were never separate

🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:

“Mafatih al-Jinan is the Islamic Book of Hours — encoded with celestial timing, angelic recitation, and ritual precision. It's a grimoire in disguise.”

No screenshots needed unless you want to show a particular du’a layout or ritual calendar design.

The Nakshatras – Dennis M. Harness
Stage II: Planetary Ritual Interface
(Cross-linked to Stage VI for Islamic lunar mansion overlays)

🧩 Summary:

Dennis Harness' The Nakshatras: The Lunar Mansions of Vedic Astrology is a powerful map of the 27 (sometimes 28) lunar mansions (nakshatras) that the Moon passes through each month, forming the backbone of Vedic time-based astrology. These lunar asterisms are used for timing rituals, understanding karmic patterns, and diagnosing spiritual archetypes.
The text offers mythological, psychological, and practical guidance for each nakshatra and unlocks a crucial bridge between Vedic astrology and the Arabic-Islamic system of lunar mansions (Manazil al-Qamar).

🌒 Core Components:

1. 27 Nakshatras: Lunar Archetypes
Each nakshatra includes:
Deity & mythology (e.g. Indra, Soma, Agni)
Symbol (e.g. ear, axe, yoni, serpent)
Shakti / spiritual power
Planetary rulership
Best/worst activities during this phase
Psychological traits and shadow elements
2. Ritual Timing Engine
Used to determine auspicious days for:
Marriage
Spiritual initiation
Healing
Journeying
Death rites
This is a lunar magick calendar, not solar like the Western zodiac
3. Planetary Rulers of Nakshatras
Each nakshatra is ruled by a planet, establishing a crosswalk to planetary magick
➤ Example: Bharani (ruled by Venus) → fertility, beauty, sexual vitality
➤ Ashlesha (ruled by Mercury) → serpentine energy, shadow cunning
4. Islamic Integration
The Manazil al-Qamar (Islamic lunar mansions) are essentially adapted nakshatra systems
Arabic names (Al-Baldah, Al-Butain, etc.) have direct Vedic counterparts
This book gives you Vedic keys to unlock hidden Islamic star magick

🔮 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:

Lunar Timing System:

➤ Works alongside Liber Lunae and Mafatih al-Jinan for celestial ritual planning

Nakshatra-Angel Bridge:

➤ Use planetary rulers of nakshatras to call corresponding angels or jinn from Skinner / Raziel tables

Vedic-Islamic Decoder Ring:

➤ Re-synchronize Islamic lunar ritual systems with older sidereal patterns

✨ Unique Contributions:

Brings in the soul karma layer of lunar astrology

Gives personality and deity context to each moon phase

Connects Islamic manazil to deep Vedic ritual magick

🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:

“The nakshatras are moon-gates of fate. Harnessing them reboots the lunar operating system of both Vedic and Islamic ritual timing.”

No screenshots required — unless you want to create a lunar mansion calendar grid or soul wheel overlay in your system UI.

Al-Qabisi (Alcabitius) — Medieval Islamic Astrology

Al-Qabisi, known in Latin as Alcabitius, was a foundational figure in medieval Islamic astrology. His works synthesized Greek astrological knowledge with Islamic cosmology, creating detailed treatises on planetary influences, houses, and celestial timing. His writings formed the backbone of Islamic astrological practice, deeply influencing ritual magic and spiritual timing. Including Al-Qabisi's astrology enriches your planetary ritual interface by connecting celestial patterns with spiritual energetic flows, emphasizing how cosmic cycles influence earthly and personal transformation.

Conference of the Birds by Fariduddin Attar

Conference of the Birds is a masterpiece of Sufi mystical poetry. It allegorically depicts the soul's journey toward unity with the Divine through the metaphor of a group of birds seeking their king. Each bird represents a human flaw or spiritual state, illustrating the stages of purification and awakening.

This text encapsulates core Sufi themes such as divine love, self-annihilation (fana), and the path of spiritual realization. It offers poetic insight into the transformative journey your Stage 6 addresses, making it invaluable for framing Sufi philosophy and mystical aspiration.

Rumi — The Mathnawi (Nicholson Translation)

Rumi’s Mathnawi is one of the most influential works of Sufi mysticism, filled with stories, parables, and teachings emphasizing divine love, unity, and the spiritual path. Rumi’s poetry speaks directly to the heart, urging seekers to transcend ego and embrace the boundless flow of divine presence. Referencing the Mathnawi can provide profound spiritual context, illustrating the inner experiences and awakening that Stage 6 aims to cultivate.

The Bezels of Wisdom by Ralph Austin (Hermetic Treatise)

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The Bezels of Wisdom is a classic Hermetic text attributed to the legendary Hermes Trismegistus. It explores the nature of divine knowledge, cosmic principles, and the alchemical transformation of the soul. Including this work helps bridge Islamic occult wisdom with the broader Hermetic and alchemical traditions, showing the shared symbolic language and metaphysical frameworks underlying many esoteric systems, including those explored in Liber Hermetis.

Shams Al-Buni — Islamic Talismanic and Magical Writings

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Shams Al-Buni is a central figure in Islamic occultism, renowned for his writings on talismanic magic, divine names, and spiritual invocations. His works provide practical formulas and theoretical foundations for creating protective talismans, invoking divine names, and engaging with spiritual energies. Integrating Shams Al-Buni’s texts deepens your coverage of ritual magic and sacred names in Stage 6, offering readers concrete tools for spiritual sovereignty and protection.

Canon of Agama (Attributed to Avicenna / Graeco-Islamic Esoteric Medicine)
Stage II: Planetary Ritual Interface & Stage VI: Sufi & Islamic Occult Systems

🧩 Summary:
The Canon of Agama is a mystical-medical manuscript from the Islamicate world that blends astral medicine, planetary forces, and spiritual physiology. It echoes Avicenna's Canon of Medicine but operates more like a spiritual anatomy manual, integrating Hermetic, Galenic, and Qur'anic principles.

🏺 Core Systems Described:
1. Planetary Body Map
Each organ, bone, and humor is ruled by a planetary spirit
Example:
• Heart – Sun
• Liver – Jupiter
• Brain – Moon / Mercury
2. Lata'if / Subtle Centers
Islamic esoteric physiology: 7 subtle points in the body (like chakras)
Tied to breathwork, color, planetary light, and angelic circuits
3. Four Humors + Four Elements
Balancing black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood with spiritual diagnosis
Each humor has an angelic, planetary, and elemental resonance
4. Celestial Pharmacology
Herbs, minerals, oils are encoded with astrological timing and planetary virtue
Magic of medicine = aligned timing + proper invocation

🔑 Use in Ritual Practice:
Energetic Healing + Diagnosis
➤ Planetary imbalance = emotional, spiritual, and physical dissonance
Invocation of Angelic Healing Currents
➤ Certain archangels govern healing of specific organs
Dreamwork and Diagnosis by Lunar Timing
➤ Dreams used as a diagnostic mirror; dream timing = planetary medicine

🧠 Integration into AscensionOS & PA2:
Planetary-Chakra Bridge between Islamic and Vedic systems
Spiritual Medicine OS Layer: Healing rites, talismanic healing, solarized oils
Qi-Pulse Diagnosis Hybrid: Islamic pulse reading with planetary aura logic
Custom Body Grid for Energy Work: Based on organs, angelic influence, elemental distribution
✨ Unique Contributions:
Forms the medical backbone of Islamic esotericism
Connects deeply with Golden Flower and Taoist Yoga in later dream/alchemy stages
Provides the "bio-spiritual diagnostic interface" for Islamic mysticism
🧠 Conceptual Takeaway:
“The Canon of Agama is not just medicine — it’s a map of divine harmony etched into the body. It is Islamic alchemy embodied.”
No images required — but you could turn its body map into a bio-spiritual diagram if you want a visual module in AscensionOS.

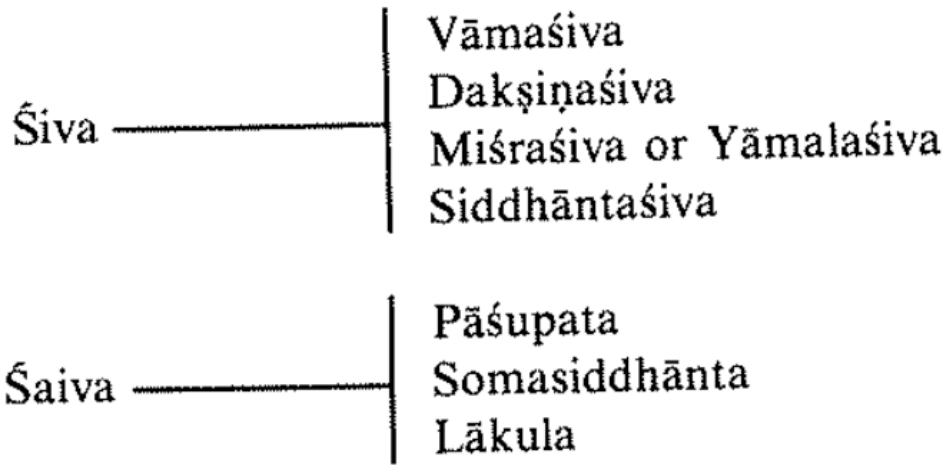


Table 1. Śaiva Sects Mentioned in the Purāṇas and Other Sources.

Kūrma Purāṇa	Kāpāla[63]	Pāśupata	Also Vāma, Bhairava, Pūrva-paścima and Pāñcarātra
	Soma[64] Lākura or Lāñjana or Vākula	Pāśupata	Also Vāma and Bhairava
	Soma[65] Lāṅgala (Lāguḍa)	Pāśupata	Also Vāma and Bhairava
Nāradīya P.[66]	Kāpāla Mahāvrata-dhara	Pāśupata Siddhānta-märga	
Śiva P. Vāya-[67] vīya-saṃhitā	Kāpāla Mahāvrata-dhara	Pāśupata Siddhānta-märga	
Skanda P.[68]	Kaṅkāla Kālamukha	Pāśupata Śiva	Also Mahāvrata
Skanda P.[69] Sūta-saṃhitā	Kāpāla Lākula	Pāśupata	Also Soma

Svayambhu[70] P.	Soma Vā(Lā)kula	Pāśupata Śaiva	
Vāmana P.	Kāpālikā[71] Kāladamana Mahāvratin[72] Kālāmukha	Pāśupata Śaiva Pāśupata Śaiva	Also Mahāpāśupata and several others
Yogavāsiṣṭha[73] and Liṅga P.	Soma Nākula		Also Lokāyata and Bhairava
Ānandagiri[74]		Pāśupata Śaiva	Also Ugra, Raudra, Bhaṭṭa and Jaṃgama
Rājaśekhara[75]	Mahāvrata- dhara Kālamukha	Pāśupata Śaiva	
Śaktisaṅgama-[76] tantra	Kālāmukha	Pāśupata Śaiva	Also six others
Siddha-[77] siddhānta- paddhati	Kāpālika	Pāśupata Śaiva	Also Mahāvrata- dhara and five others
Malkāpuram[78] Stone Inscription	Śivaśāsana Kālānana	Pāśupata Śaiva	

Table 2. The Treatises and Scriptures Spoken by Sadāśiva's Faces.

Direction	*Face*	*Karaṇeśvara*	*Śāstra*
West	Sadyojāta	Brahmā	Laukika
North	Vāmadeva	Viṣṇu	Vaidika
South	Aghora	Rudra	Ādhyātmika
East	Tatpuruṣa	Īśvara	Atimārga
Upper	Īśāna	Sadāśiva	Mantratantra

Table 3. Divisions of the Mantratantra.

Direction	*Face*	*Class of Āgama*
West	Sadyojāta	*Bhūta*
North	Vāmadeva	*Vāma*
South	Aghora	*Bhairava*
East	Tatpuruṣa	*Gāruḍa*
Upper	Īśāna	*Siddhānta*

Table 4. The Tantras Listed in the Pratiṣṭhalakṣaṇasārasamuccaya.

East: Gāruḍatantras

1. Haram
2. Huṅkāram
3. Bindusāram
4. Kalāmṛtam
5. Devatrāsam
6. Sutrāsam
7. Śābaram
8. Kālaśābaram
9. Pakṣirājam
10. Śikhāyogam
11. Śikhāsāram
12. Śikhāmṛtam
13. Pañcabhūtam
14. Vibhāgam
15. Śūlyabhedavinirṇayam
16. Kālakaṣṭham
17. Kālāṅgam
18. Kālakūṭam
19. Paṭadrumam
20. Kambojam
21. Kambalam
22. Kuṃkumam
23. Kālakuṇḍam
24. Kaṭāhakam
25. Suvarṇarekham
26. Sugrīvam
27. Totalam
28. Totalottaram

North: Vāmatantras

1. Nayam
2. Nayottaram
3. Mūkam
4. Mohanam
5. Mohanāmṛtam
6. Karapūjāvidhānam
7. Vīṇātantram
8. Jayam
9. Vijayam
10. Ajitam
11. Aparājitam
12. Siddhanityodayam
13. Jyeṣṭham
14. Cintāmaṇimahodayam
15. Kuhakam
16. Kāmadhenukadambakam
17. Ānandam
18. Rudram
19. Bhadram
20. Kiṃkaram
21. Anantavijayam
22. Bhoktam
23. Daurvāsam
24. Bījabheda

West: Bhūtatantra

1. Halāhalam
2. Hayagrīvam
3. Karakoṭam
4. Kaṭaṅkakam
5. Karoṭam (Kavāṭam)
6. Maṇḍamānam
7. Kaṅkoṭam
8. Khaḍgarāvaṇam
9. Caṇḍāsidhāram

South: Dakṣiṇatantra

1. Svacchandabhairavam
2. Caṇḍabhairavam
3. Krodhabhairavam
4. Unmattabhairavam
5. Asitāṅgabhairavam
6. Rurubhairavam
7. Kapālīśam
8. Samuccayam
9. Ghoram

10. Huṅkāram
11. Hāhākāram
12. Śivāravam
13. Ghorāṭṭahāsam
14. Ucchiṣṭam
15. Ghurghuram
16. Duṣṭatrāsakam
17. Vimalam
18. Vikaṭam
19. Mahoṭkatam
20. Yamaghaṇṭam

10. Ghoṣaṇam
11. Ghoram
12. Niśāsañcāram
13. Durmukham
14. Bhīmāṅgam
15. Ḍāmararāvam
16. Bhīmam
17. Vetālamardanam
18. Ucchuṣmam
19. Vāmam
20. Kapālam
21. Bhairavam
22. Puṣpam
23. Advayam
24. Triśiram (Triśirobhairavam)
25. Ekapādam
26. Siddhayogeśvaram
27. Pañcāmṛtam
28. Prapañcam
29. Yoginījālaśambaram
30. Viśvavikaṇṭham
31. Jhaṅkāram
32. Tilakodyānabhairava

10. Huṅkāram
11. Hāhākāram
12. Śivāravam
13. Ghorāṭṭahāsam
14. Ucchiṣṭam
15. Ghurghuram
16. Duṣṭatrāsakam
17. Vimalam
18. Vikaṭam
19. Mahoṭkatam
20. Yamaghaṇṭam

10. Ghoṣaṇam
11. Ghoram
12. Niśāsañcāram
13. Durmukham
14. Bhīmāṅgam
15. Ḍāmararāvam
16. Bhīmam
17. Vetālamardanam
18. Ucchuṣmam
19. Vāmam
20. Kapālam
21. Bhairavam
22. Puṣpam
23. Advayam
24. Triśiram (Triśirobhairavam)
25. Ekapādam
26. Siddhayogeśvaram
27. Pañcāmṛtam
28. Prapañcam
29. Yoginījālaśambaram
30. Viśvavikaṇṭham
31. Jhaṅkāram
32. Tilakodyānabhairava

Table 5. The Bhairavāṣṭaka.

PLSS	Bhairavāṣṭaka (ŚKS)	Bhairavāṣṭaka (JY)	Eight Bhairava Tantras (BY)
1. *Svacchandabhairava*	*Svacchanda*	*Svacchanda*	*Svacchanda*
2. *Caṇḍa*	*Bhairava*	*Caṇḍa*	*Krodha*
3. *Krodha*	*Caṇḍa*	*Krodha*	*Unmatta*
4. *Unmatta*	*Krodha*	*Unmatta*	*Ugra*
5. *Asitāṅga*	*Unmatta*	*Asita*	*Kāpālī*
6. *Ruru*	*Asitāṅga*	*Ruru*	*Jhaṅkāra*
7. *Kapālīśa*	*Mahocchuṣma*	*Jhaṅkāra*	*Śekhara*
8. *Samuccayam*	*Kapālīśa*	*Kapālīśa*	*Vijaya*

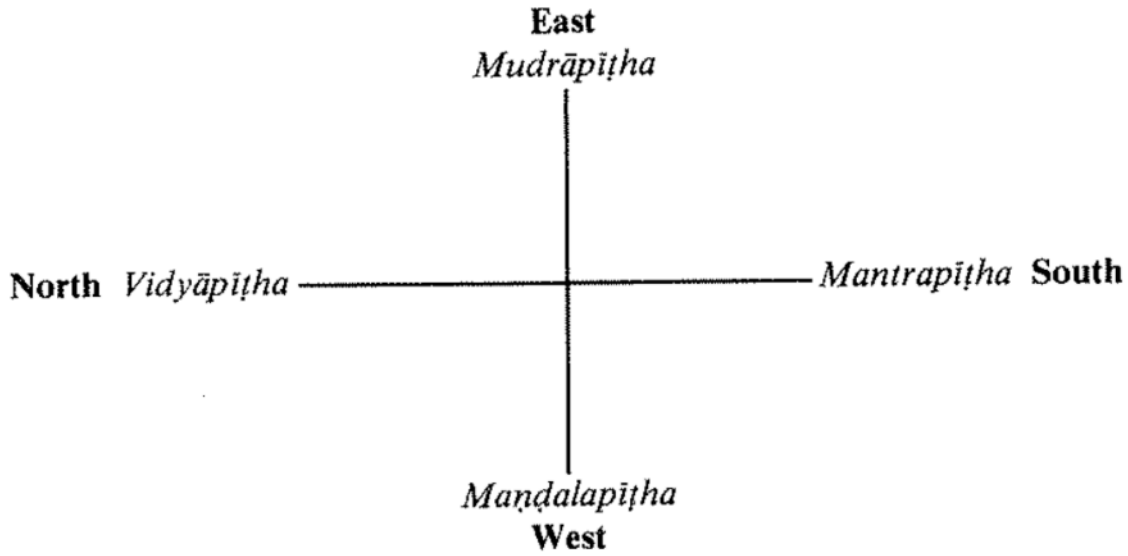
Listed below are the names of the eight groups of the sixty-four *Bhairavatantras* according to the ŚKS (see Table 6). In the first column (A1) are listed the names of each group of eight Tantras in the order in which they are enumerated in the ŚKS prior to their detailed exposition. Their corresponding Bhairavas are listed in the second column (B1). In the third column (A2) these same groups are listed in the order in which they appear when the Tantras of each group are named individually in the ŚKS. Their corresponding Bhairavas make up the fourth column (B2).

Table 6. The Eight Groups of Bhairavatantras.

A1 *Original Order of the Groups Enumerated in the ŚKS*	B1 *Bhairava*	A2 *Order of Detailed Presentation*	B2 *Bhairava*
1. Bhairava	Svacchanda	Svacchandarūpa	Bahurūpa
2. Yāmala	Bhairava	Yāmala	——
3. Mata	Caṇḍa	Mata	Caṇḍa

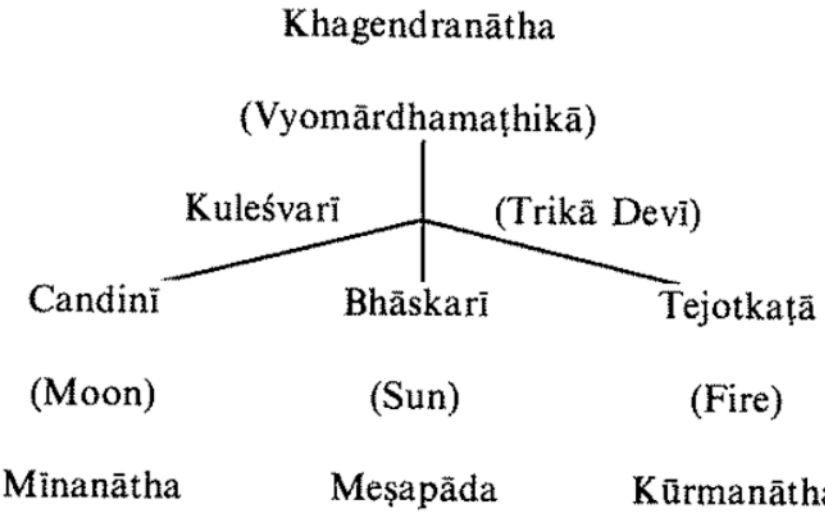
4. Maṅgala	Krodha	Maṅgala	Krodha
5. Cakra	Unmatta	Cakra	Asitāṅga
6. Śikhā	Asitāṅga	Bahurūpa	Ruru
7. Bahurūpa	Mahocchuṣma	Vāgīśa	Kapālīśa
8. Vāgīśa	Kapālīśa	Śikhā	Unmatta

Figure 1. The Four Pīṭhas.



Svacchanda — Asitāṅga
Caṇḍa — Ruru
Krodha — Jhaṅkāra
Unmatta — Kapālīśa

Figure 2. The Transmission of Trikamaṭhikā According to the CMSS.



The goddess emerges from the centre of reality along with Paramānandabhairava. The whole universe is instructed by this power which is the paramount knowledge of the Divine Transmission (*divyaugha*). This *maṭhikā* is that of the line of Siddhas known as the Tradition of the Elders (*vṛddhavallī*). It is in this tradition that Siddhanātha incarnated in this world during each of the four Ages (*yuga*) as a Kaula master, as follows:

First Yuga	Khagendranātha and Vijāhutī
Disciples	Vimala, Suśobha
Second Yuga	Kūrmanātha and Maṅgalājyotī
Disciples	Ajita, Vijita
Third Yuga	Meṣanātha and Kāmāṅgā
Disciples	Khakulanātha More than sixty-four Kulas

Prince	*Master*	*Ovallī*	*Pīṭha*	*Town*	*Direction in relation to Śrīśaila*	*Grove*	*Duration of Vows*
1. (Amara)	Siddhanātha	Bodha	Tripurottara	Ḍohāla	South	Kambilī	12 years
2. Varadeva	Vidyānanda	Prabhu	Kamada	Kuṇḍī	West	?	?
3. Citra-nātha	Kaula-siṃhamuni	Pāda	Aṭṭahāsa	Daṇḍa-ratna	North	Bilvākṣa	12 years
4. Olinātha*	Sṛṅgālamuni	Ānanda	Devīkoṭa	Bālahoma	East	Pāyavṛkṣa	7 years
5. Vṛddha-nātha	Śāṇḍilya-muni	Yoga	Dakṣiṇādi	Piṇḍa	South-West	Khairavṛkṣa	25 years
6. Guḍika-nātha	Candra-bimba	Oṃ	Kaulagiri	Gauḍikā	North-West	Nārikela-phala	8 years

* Olinātha travelled to Kāmaru, to the south of which was a place called Trikhaṇḍinī. There he performed austerities according to the instructions of Candrabimbamuni.

Table 7. The Yuganāthas, their Consorts and Disciples According to the Tantrāloka.

Direction	*Yuganātha*	*Consort*	*Disciple*	*Consort*
East	Khagendra-nātha	Vijjambā	Viktaṣṭi Vimala	Illāīambā Anantamekhalā
South	Kūrmanātha	Maṅgalā	Jaitra Avijita	Illāīambā Ānandamekhalā
West	Meṣanātha	Kāmamaṅgalā	Vindhya Ajita	Kullāīambā Ajaramekhalā
North	Macchanda-nātha	Kuṅkumāmbā	(*Six Princes*) Amaranātha Varadeva-nātha Citranātha Alinātha Vindhya-nātha Guḍikānātha	(*Consort*) Sillāī Eruṇā Kumārī Bodhāī Mahālacchī Aparamekhalā

Figure 3. Siddhacakra.

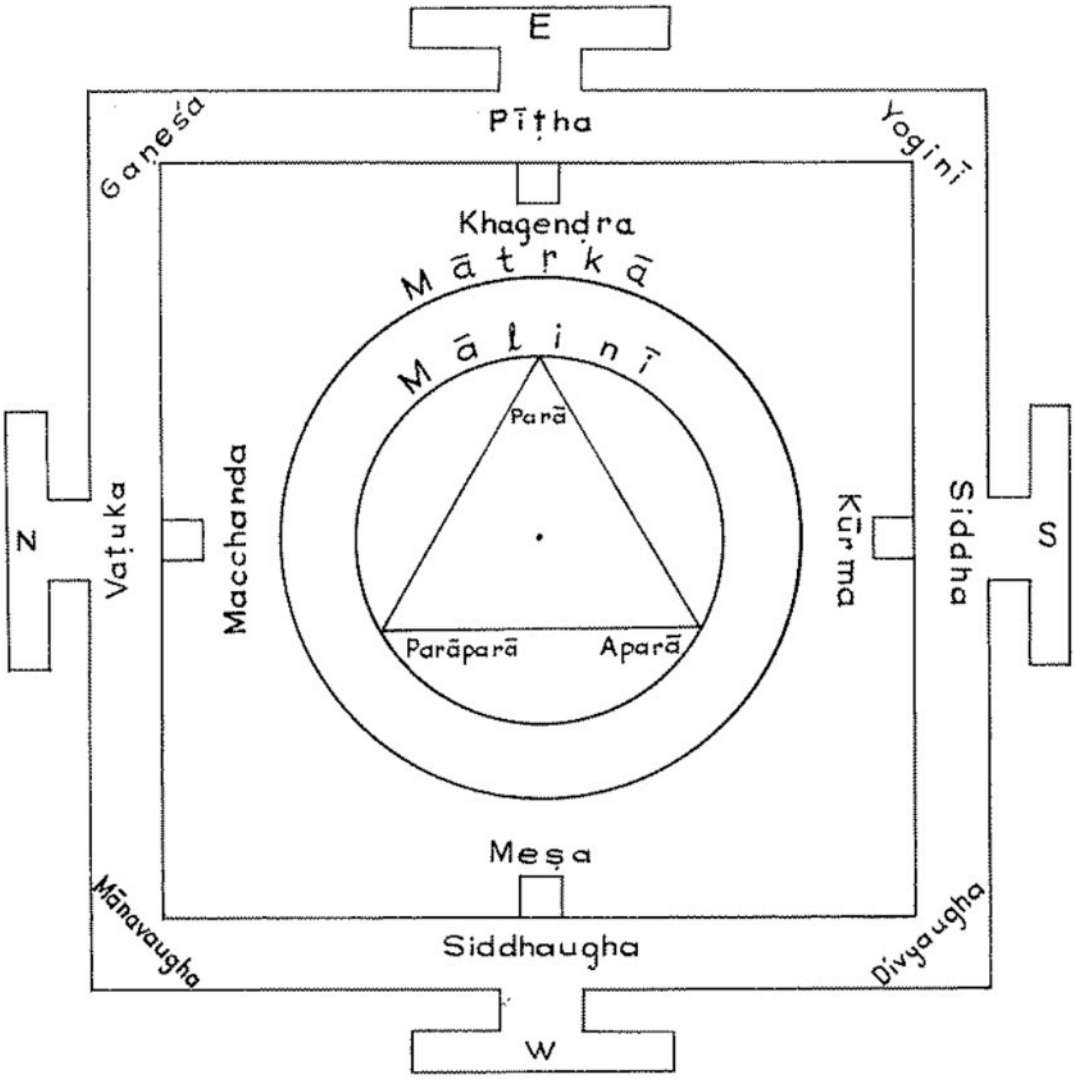
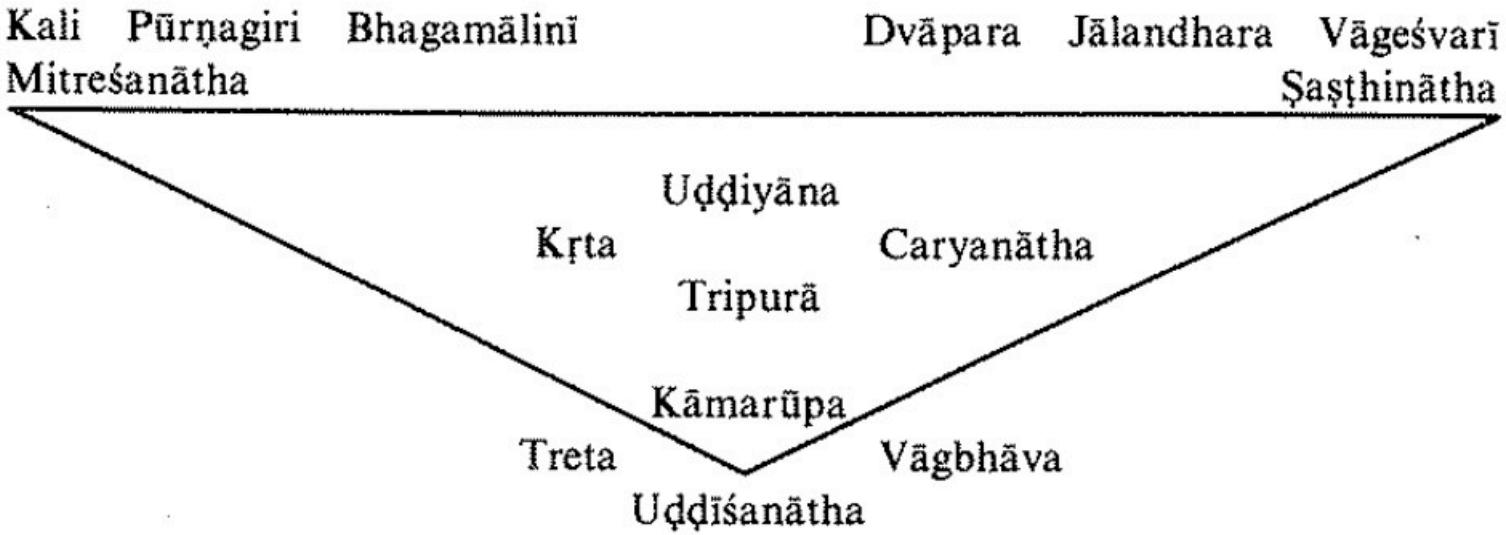


Figure 5. The Triangle of the Divyakrama.



In this volume, we will comprehensively cover the vast majority of Islamic esoteric and occult wisdom, unpacking the hidden codes, sacred names, talismanic arts, and mystical teachings that form the core of Stage 6. However, the intricate and expansive Islamicate Occult Sciences Handbook by Liana Saif will be reserved for the final part of this series. This allows us to dedicate focused attention to its complex material without overwhelming the current volume. The concluding part will not only bring the Islamic occult deconstruction to its fullest expression but also weave in revealing insights from the dark web, exposing hidden spiritual and technological control systems. This final installment promises a powerful synthesis and culmination, guiding readers toward ultimate spiritual sovereignty and awakening.

Closing and Transition

As we reach the culmination of this volume, the layers of spiritual knowledge and occult wisdom you have journeyed through form a formidable foundation for your sovereign awakening. The intricate systems, sacred rites, and hidden codes laid bare here illuminate the path from inherited control toward conscious liberation. Yet, this is but one chapter in a much larger story—one that continues beyond these pages.

The next volume awaits, poised to dive even deeper into the mysteries that remain veiled: the final keys of Islamic occult sciences and the shadowed realms of the dark web. Together, they will reveal the concealed architectures of power and spiritual manipulation that bind humanity, and more importantly, how to dismantle them.

Carry forward the insights and practices you have gathered with clarity and courage. The journey ahead beckons you to step fully into your power, armed with truth and ready to reclaim your divine sovereignty. This is not an end, but a gateway—opening into realms of greater knowledge, freedom, and transformation.

Prepare yourself, for the path grows both darker and brighter from here.